

VERONICA'S LOVERS

By G. B. Burgin

BEFORE THE WAR

IT was the eve of old Lady Huntingtower's penurious dance; she gave one every season just to assert herself, as if she were not in the habit of doing that at all seasons. Had she been poor, she would have lavished large sums on the dance to make it a success. Being enormously wealthy, however, she relied on her antiquity to carry her through to a successful issue, and, as evidence of Norman descent, displayed the blue blood in an extremely haughty nose—a nose which was as pointed as her remarks when people failed to do their duty. She was more than difficult to please, with a morbid distaste for anything "new," from frocks to millionaires; and even carried her prejudices so far as to forbid the growing of mushrooms on the Huntingtower estates. People who came up like mushrooms had a remarkable knack of climbing still higher, and, with a fine flow of language, she declared that they were "wolves in fungoid garb."

Lady Huntingtower's main object in life was to get her only son, Harry, appropriately married. "Matrimonial felicity," she was wont to observe, "is positively immoral unless you have ten thousand a year. People who presume to be happy on less, have no sense of the fitness of things; and as for the modern Paolos and Francescas who tamper with the sanctity of weddings at St. George's, Hanover square, it does not matter where they fly to, provided they only fly out of society. Society," she would remark to sympathizing friends, with an oratorical

flourish of her ear-trumpet which nearly put their eyes out, "society pays little attention to the ten commandments; so far as society is concerned, they are an impertinence, and merely serve for moral chest-protectors to the middle classes. You have only to notice the costume in a modern ball-room to be aware that the feminine half, at least, of society, does not require chest-protectors. Now, Harry, bear this in mind. Old blood and old wine should always go together. I shall find you a fitting wife, and you will make love to her as prettily as you can. Then you can be married next Spring, and *ranger* yourself. But remember, the girl must be of my choosing. I won't have you marry any one whose ancestors did not travel with Norman William. A Huntingtower cannot wed with a Cook's tourist."

The band was already indulging in that delightful operation of "tuning up," which, a certain shah once declared, produces the finest music in the world, and Lady Huntingtower, who always disagreed with any statement on any subject advanced by any over-married potentate, shuddered as she drew on gloves specially contrived to hide her skinny elbows.

"Cook's tourist! No, I don't want to marry a tourist. I don't understand you," said Huntingtower.

"I spoke in the language of metaphor."

"Well, don't, *mater*. Life's too short to grasp what it all means." Huntingtower pulled his fair mustache in an embarrassed way. "D'you mean to say I'm not to ask Veronica Wyldé to marry me unless she can

prove that her people were chums of that wandering thief, Billy the Norman?"

Lady Huntingtower reared, metaphorically speaking, and pawed the air. "'There is a sacrilege doth hedge a king'—I mean—oh, you know what I mean, though it isn't quite right. Quotations are always so much easier to invent than to quote correctly; that's what they're for. Harry, you must speak more respectfully of a monarch who was the father of the British aristocracy."

"He was—of most of 'em; but what's that to do with Veronica Wylde, mother?"

"Everything. She's too modern—only three hundred years old."

"Why, she's just twenty-four."

"I mean her people."

"Well, I don't want to marry her people, thank goodness; they're dead; and I'm dead nuts on her."

"Dead what?" almost screamed her ladyship, suddenly growing deaf in order to conceal her annoyance. "Who's dead? Why wasn't I told?"

"I soon shall be, if you worry me so, mother." Huntingtower was visibly embarrassed. "I love Veronica awfully, and I'm going to ask her to marry me. A fellow's got to do his duty by his country, don't you know. You won't let me go to South Africa and fight, so I'd better marry, and—"

"Fight at home. If 'a fellow' can't take care of himself, 'a fellow's' mother must do it for him. I'll keep an eye on you all the evening," declared Lady Huntingtower, suddenly recovering her hearing with vigor. "To bring a girl into the family whose people are only three hundred years old is to—to lower our average and—in-sult the heavenly powers. I—I'd be ashamed to look St. Peter in the face when my time came."

"St. Peter!" The young fellow was bewildered. "What has he to do with it?"

Lady Huntingtower surveyed him with fine scorn. "Are you under the impression—you, Harry—are you un-

der the impression that there will not be any social code in the next world? Do you dare to think that there will be no tables of precedence? Why, if that were so, where is one to go? Modern novels make the devil seem such a cad, one really could not tolerate him."

"S-s-s-h! Mother! You're growing theological. You must be ill." He looked at her, anxiously.

"The-o-log-i-cal! Ill!"

Old Lady Huntingtower worked at her left-hand glove with a tug which split it, jerked her head until the tiara nearly fell from her snowy hair, and sniffed audibly. When she sniffed, it meant war.

"Of course," she reluctantly admitted, "Veronica Wylde is very lovely, and all that sort of thing; but so many girls are pretty nowadays that it is much more *chic*"—she pronounced the word as though it were a young fowl—"to be aristocratically ugly."

"Is it! Well, I plump for beauty. Veronica's so beautiful, mother, she takes my breath away."

"And you'll take my life away, if you're not careful, Harry. Plump beauty, indeed! Fat is so vulgar, and plumpness very quickly degenerates into fat."

The young man sighed, and offered her his arm. "Ah, Veronica's so beautiful—so beautiful that the very wind of heaven blows more gently when she takes the air."

"Takes the fiddlesticks! I'm sure that conductor is intoxicated. Look at the way he's wagging his baton. Now, the first glove's gone, too. Comes of getting things at remainder sales. What am I to do about my gloves?"

"Come along, mother. Never mind your gloves. Jenlow's beginning to announce people. If our guests see him standing there alone, they'll think he's your brother, old Wadenham."

"How dare you speak of a belted earl as 'old Wadenham'?"

"Belted!" The young man laughed heartily. "That's good! Why, *mater*,

the only belt you could get round him would be a bronco cinch."

"Don't use any of those horrid words you picked up on the prairies of Winnipeg. Take me to the top of the stairs, and marry the girl I select for you. I tell you, I won't be argued with. The man who disobeys his mother, is sure to run away with a 'Gaiety' girl; it's a short distance nowadays from the music-hall to the baronial ditto."

The young man impatiently stuck out his arm in the correct attitude.

"Now, then, *mater*, let's sail to the head of the staircase. When I want to give you a daughter-in-law from 'the halls,' I'll let you know. Beauty and blue blood together. That's it. Never mind your glove. Your elbow's gone right through it. There's the Pontwhystle dowager whistling up the stairs, ready to feel insulted before she gets to the top."

"Ingrate! And don't dare to refer to my elbows. I'd lovely elbows when I was your age. Kings have kissed them."

"Never mind your guilty past, mother, but come along."

"Guilty past, indeed! I'll talk to you in my boudoir to-morrow. Is my train out? You'll bring my gray hair to— Ah, my dear Estelle. How good of you to come to-night! So Mary has secured the Entwistle diamonds at last! But, then, she was always so patient and persevering that of course Entwistle *had* to propose. I hear that the betting at the clubs was all in Mary's favor. Duke, my dear duke, you look younger than ever. Harry, take him away, and"—in a hurried whisper—"give him some of that old Tokay, and let him sleep in a quiet corner. It will be so awkward if he goes to sleep on the staircase, and wakes up with a yell. When he did that, last year, people thought he wanted to scalp some one."

Huntingtower dutifully led off the aged duke, and put him to sleep in a corner.

"When your father and I were young bloods together," began the duke,

with a senile chuckle, "there was a doosid pretty milliner in—" He swallowed a glass of Tokay, and "fell on sleep."

After telling a footman to keep an eye on the duke, Huntingtower hurried back to the top of the staircase, filled with rage lest his mother should have had time to say something nasty to Veronica Wylde; but, as he calmed down, he reflected that Lady Huntingtower rarely insulted people in her own house. She always, on the Arab principle, gave them twenty yards' start, and then cut their throats or stabbed their reputations—if they had any. He reached the head of the staircase just in time to hear his mother tell Mrs. Marjoribanks, Veronica Wylde's pretty young aunt, that "Harry and Edith Pontwhystle were going to make a match of it."

Veronica smiled, knowing that this was intended to be overheard. Mrs. Marjoribanks, too, was equal to the occasion.

"So sorry I can't congratulate you, my dear Lady Huntingtower. I've just heard that Edith has gone off with young O'Gorman, of the Guards."

"G-g-gone off! O'Gorman! That penniless Irishman attached to a bog!"

"Well, now, she's attached to the Irishman, with the bog thrown in. If they quarrel, he'll throw her into it. An Irish bog will swallow anything. Your sort doesn't seem very sad about it."

The youthful Huntingtower came eagerly forward. "Delighted to hear it. The *mater* is always drawing the longbow. Got the habit from our Norman ancestors, and can't help it. You see, she—she's so deaf," he added, by way of extenuation. "Never made love to Edith Pontwhystle in my life. Ah, Crewe, take Mrs. Marjoribanks into the conservatory; it—it's cooler there."

He cast an imploring glance at Mrs. Marjoribanks, as Algy Crewe hesitated. Crewe wanted to make love to Veronica and her money.

Mrs. Marjoribanks, who was good nature itself, with the soul of a girl of

eighteen in the plump body of a widow of three-and-thirty, vigorously fastened on to Crewe. "Come, Algy, and let's talk about the transmigration of souls," she said, cheerfully. "It's so much pleasanter than realizing the crushing of bodies. Have you seen Professor Cheyne anywhere?"

"No, I haven't. I'd rather talk about the transmigration of bodies, and assist in the transmigration of Huntingtower," growled Algernon Crewe, seeing that there was no escape from Mrs. Marjoribanks. It made him furious that Veronica, beautiful as a dream, should be borne away in triumph by the son of the house.

"Our first dance," said Huntingtower, eagerly offering his arm to Veronica, who, dark, tall, majestic, with ebon hair and eyes of liquid light, did not seem at all overwhelmed by his attentions. Her fine eyes roved restlessly from group to group, as she filled up her programme. Huntingtower, handing it back to her, noticed that four dances, all of them waltzes, were marked with the letter "X." "It's that beggar, Graham," he groaned to himself. "Why haven't I the luck to be starting for South Africa! The absent are always right. That's why they go away. People can't quarrel with them till they come back. For two pins, I'd go and enlist."

Veronica gave him a couple of dances, but, in spite of her self-control, Huntingtower saw that she was absent and preoccupied. "Graham hasn't turned up," he said, a little ungenerously. "Expect he's saving himself for the march to Victoria Station with his company to-morrow. They say if a man lives through that, the Boers will be a mere trifle."

Veronica's solemn eyes bared his soul.

"Harry! You are the heir to a great name—a great house—great traditions—young—strong. Is it a fitting time for you to be dancing attendance on women when your country has need of you? I thought better of you. Are you going to become a—man?"

The young fellow's eyes flashed fire.

"Right! You are quite right! I've tried to make the *mater* see it in that way. She says she wouldn't mind my fighting against gentlemen; but Boers! Pah! It would be an insult to be killed by a Boer."

"I am ashamed of your narrow prejudices." The dance was over, and Veronica stood in a corner fanning herself. "A man who, like the Boers, fights for his hearth and country, is a gentleman anywhere. Ah, Algy, your dance?"

Fair-haired Algy Crewe bore her away in triumph, and Huntingtower leaned moodily against the wall until sent for by his mother, who told him to "make the running with Lady Eva Saintfôret." Veronica's words appealed to his very soul; but "he had great possessions," and a mother who idolized him. How could he go to South Africa to slay ignorant farmers?

Presently, Veronica came back.

"Algy also is a coward," she said, scornfully. "He says the major will do all the fighting that is necessary. Professor Cheyne volunteered, but did not know how to ride. He fell in the tan at the riding-school, and held to his horse's tail until his spectacles smashed. He, at least, is a man."

Huntingtower looked at her, his eyes full of boyish love and longing. "Don't say any more, please. I've borne as much as I can bear. Veronica, I love you. Will you marry me?"

"No," said Veronica. "When I marry, I shall marry a man."

Her eyes brightened, her color came and went. Following her glance, Huntingtower saw Major Graham standing in the doorway, erect, handsome, beautifully groomed. "Graham's the man," he said to himself, as Professor Cheyne, tall, gaunt, angular, with untrimmed masses of grizzled hair and beard, came up with Mrs. Marjoribanks on his arm. They were having an animated argument as to the expediency of eating ices, the professor contending that ices were self-murder, and Mrs. Marjoribanks, in her pretty, wilful way, urging that she must be iced or the professor would make too much

of her melting moments. Would he please go and dance with her enemies? She wanted to see them suffer as she had suffered.

Under cover of this badinage, Huntingtower slipped out of the ball-room, jumped into a hansom, and disappeared. Later, his mother discovered his absence, and searched for him in vain. It eased her anxious mind to discover that he had not disappeared with Veronica.

About an hour later, Huntingtower returned. He found Graham and Veronica sitting out their last dance in the conservatory, and greeted Graham cordially. The boy was a little pale under his tanned, healthy complexion.

"No time to wait for a commission, major," he said, quietly. "I sha'n't be more than a week behind you."

"What!" Veronica was surprised. "You—you haven't done anything rash?" she asked, anxiously.

"No," he said, gravely, but with a brave attempt at a smile. "I've been round to De la Zouche. He's going to make it all right for me with the Yeomanry to-morrow. We sail next week."

The major gripped his hand, warmly. "I knew it was in you, Harry. All good luck and a V.C."

"I'll have earned it, major, by the time I've broken it to the Mum." He turned to Veronica. "You haven't wished me luck."

Veronica, very pale, put both her hands in his. Graham left them to have it out.

"Have I sent you to your death, Harry?" she asked, earnestly.

He was little more than a lad, and his lip quivered for a moment.

"No," he said, quietly. "You've shown me it's a man's business to fight for his country. When I heard of those poor city chaps throwing up their berths to join the Yeomanry, I felt ashamed. You don't think I shall fight the worse for loving you, Veronica?"

"Indeed—indeed—no. God be with you till we meet again," she

said, softly. "I know you will do your duty, Harry. First, forgive me for——"

"Stinging me into doing it!" He looked her full in the face. "No, dear, I'm not going to worry you any more. I see it's hopeless. If I get a chance, I'll look after the major."

From the height of her gracious womanhood, she gazed down on the slender, resolute lad. Her eyes caught fire from his.

"May I—may I?" He faltered. Then he kissed her, and she kissed him in return.

"Now," he said, drawing a long breath, "you've set your seal upon me. I know that you don't love me—that you never can love me, but you've kissed me, and I shall go with a quiet mind. I—I'll look after Graham."

She was touched by his chivalry; but Lady Huntingtower suddenly appeared with the German ambassador, and Veronica danced as in a dream.

When the first faint light of dawn stole into Grosvenor square over the tops of the tall houses, it was Graham who took Veronica down to her carriage, while Algy Crewe followed protestingly with Mrs. Marjoribanks, in spite of the professor's eagerness to secure a final word with the pretty widow. The professor shambled along beside Mrs. Marjoribanks like a huge bear, and received the widow's cut and thrust with unflinching bravery.

Under cover of Mrs. Marjoribanks suddenly discovering that both her slippers were undone and insisting on Algy fastening one and the professor tackling the other, Graham found time for a few hurried words with Veronica.

"You were kind to Harry," he whispered. "Give me something to show that you will think of me sometimes."

Veronica drew a thin gold circlet from her finger—her dead mother's wedding-ring. Graham understood, and, hastily pressing it to his lips, slipped it on his little finger.

"Duty first," he said. "Then——?"

"Then you will come back to home and friends."

"To home and friends and—you!"

He raised her hand to his lips, and turned away in the darkness.

Mrs. Marjoribanks jumped into the brougham with a sigh of relief. "I wanted to give the major time to say good-bye," she said, softly. "Crewe is furious with me—spiteful little flaxen-haired toad. There was murder in his eye."

Veronica gratefully pressed her hand. Two out of her three lovers were going to the wars. For a moment, she almost regretted that she had been born a soldier's daughter.

II

TWO YEARS LATER

EVERY one knows that deadly dull and eminently respectable London street wherein dwell all the noted medical specialists of England. You suddenly plunge from the turmoil and traffic of crowded thoroughfares, and as suddenly encounter the passive stillness, the masterly quietude, of the Street of Death. If you go slowly down the street and look at the neat little brass plates on the doors, you will find that every other house is inhabited by a doctor of repute. Most sufferers—especially if they be wealthy ones—halt at the top of Harley street and, wondering whether they shall turn to the right or to the left, bid farewell to the world with the first steps. Few enter it with a light heart. Men and women come there to be judged, carrying with them a secret which is no secret to the doctors. Sometimes, they approach it with jaunty, indifferent steps, as if glad to hear that they must shortly lay down their burdens; sometimes, with worried, anxious faces, wanting to know how short their lives may be; sometimes, they drive up in hansoms or broughams, and knock at the doctor's door with fierce resolution; sometimes, your woman of fashion wears the mien of one who has so many social engagements that the intrusion of death is a liberty as unpardonable as it is ill-timed.

Harley street is the Street of Judgment, and in it are judged all the follies, the vices, the criminal weaknesses, the misfortunes, the wickednesses of men and women. Sometimes, it is the innocent who suffer for the guilty; but in all cases, guilty and innocent alike, Rhadamanthus pronounces sentence—a sentence from which there is no appeal.

A man or woman may enter Harley street with everything earth can give—wealth, position, love, intellect—and may leave it, half an hour later, poorer than the lusty beggar who sweeps the crossing lower down. The crossing-sweeper has years of life before him; the "patient" leaves life behind, as inexorably doomed to die as the trembling wretch who hears the black-capped judge pronounce the fatal words.

An acute observer, watching these men and women, finds food for pained reflection. Even the very cab-drivers slacken their speed, as if they, too, felt the subtle influence of the place, the uselessness of striving to hurry away from death.

On this particularly bright December afternoon—for once there was no London fog making the air yellow and thick and hard to breathe—Major the Honorable George Graham, younger son of the Earl of Eske, just home from South Africa, was the last person in the world to worry himself about the possibility of dying. For months past he had lived with death, hobnobbed with him, met him in every corner of the veldt, on top of every kopje—encountered him without fear, as a soldier should. And so, as he strolled along on this December afternoon, admiring the complexions of his countrywomen, the beauty of the fair girls who passed him, he suddenly remembered his old school friend, Harcourt, the rapidly-rising Harley-street specialist. How surprised Harcourt would feel in the midst of his professional vocations to see an old friend! Unversed in the ways of medical men, however, Graham was not aware that every moment of a fashionable doctor's time is

occupied, and felt rather chilled and astonished that he was not at once admitted to Harcourt's presence.

A pretty maid showed him into a somberly furnished room, where he amused himself by studying the faces of the people who also were waiting. As time went on, he found out that they had all come by appointment, and that most of them dreaded the visit. Every now and again, a little bell tinkled softly, and the waiting people looked at one another, wondering who was to be the next victim. Then, a pretty girl, who wore a white cap, came in and gently murmured a name. If it happened to be a woman who was called, she rose and shook out her skirts with a nervous affectation of indifference which deceived no one. Sometimes, her eyes filled with tears. When a man was softly summoned, he got up with a rush, and went out as if anxious to know the worst. The curious thing about this waiting crowd was that no member of it returned. Every few minutes, the pretty girl came in again, gently murmuring a fresh name, and the victim disappeared.

At first, Graham took little notice of the doctor's patients. Feeling sound as a bell himself, although his wound was not quite healed, he could not sympathize with the miserable people around him. It did, however, occur to him that most of them were in good society—the term "good" is elastic as applied to some phases of society—and that Harcourt must be earning an enormous income. He was glad to make this discovery, for, personally, he had often thrashed Harcourt when a boy, and the latter's position was evidently due to the chastening effects of such thoughtful discipline.

At last, tired of observing the sad-faced people around him, Graham took up a paper, and became immersed in its contents. But the morbid tension in the air soon compelled him to put it down again. One by one, the people went away until there were only three left. The most prominent of the three, a stout man, trembled as if afflicted with palsy. When his

name was murmured, his tottering legs scarcely bore him to the door. Graham, pitiful, though intolerant of such cowardice, proffered a helping hand, and led him into the passage.

"Dashed good of you. Tha-anks!" said the fat man, quivering like a jelly. "It's trying, you know—dashed trying. Don't know when I've had such a trying time. Of course, there is no brandy-and-soda on the premises. Doctors are so—so dashed selfish."

The pretty girl motioned him to follow her.

"Can't you see I'm talking to this gentleman," snapped the fat man, angrily. It was evident that he clung to Graham as the last straw which bound him to earth. "Don't interrupt us." He laid hold of the balustrade with a trembling hand. "Dashed trying," he pitifully repeated. "And not a brandy-and-soda within half a mile."

"I'm afraid you'll have to go," Graham suggested. "Brace up. Have a B.-and-S. when it's all over."

"Dashed hard," quavered the fat man. "At my time of life, too, when I wanted to enjoy myself. Don't you think so?"

"I suppose it is," Graham admitted, without grasping the nature of the fat man's complaint; and the pretty girl in the white cap and apron again beckoned impatiently.

Graham went back to the anteroom, and found two ladies there. From time to time, they coughed nervously or fidgeted with their umbrellas. These were the only outward indications of their consuming trouble. When their names were called together, they got up as if about to enter a drawing-room, and quietly went to their doom. Graham was left alone, confident that he would soon see his old chum again, without having to go through the ordeal of watching more agonized faces. As the pretty girl in the white cap appeared and murmured his name, he could not help contrasting his own cheerfulness with the gloom of the people who had preceded him into the hall of judgment.

The girl motioned him to enter a large, somewhat meagerly furnished room—a room which contained little to distract the attention of either owner or patient, for everything in it was drab, dingy, dull. Its dreary atmosphere annoyed Graham. "What a confounded prig you've become, Harty," he almost shouted, as he entered. "This room is enough to—Why, I beg your pardon!" He stopped confusedly, for the little, dark, frenzied-eyed man seated at the table was not Harcourt.

The little dark man bowed. He had a big head, a wide mouth, and mad-looking, rolling, gray eyes. Graham noticed his delicate fingers and broad shoulders.

"I expected to find my friend, Dr. Harcourt, here."

"Harcourt? Oh, no; he's been called down to Sandringham," barked the little dark man, with a fierce glance at Graham. "I'm looking after his people until to-morrow. I'm Powerscourt. You've heard of me, of course. Your name doesn't seem to be on the list. Have you an appointment?"

"No"—Graham was rather amused at being taken for a patient—"but I wanted to see Harcourt himself."

"He'll be back to-morrow. Sent round at the last moment to know whether I would take his people for him."

The little dark man said this as if his consenting to "take" Harcourt's people were the greatest honor he could bestow on Harcourt. Graham immediately congratulated himself that he was not one of Harcourt's "people." This unknown physician seemed to be somewhat of a prig.

"Sit down," said the little dark man, hastily taking out a big, solemn-looking watch with a fat dial. "Sit down, and I'll examine you. I can't waste time asking questions. A case of heart. Yes, must be heart. You look like a man with heart. Of course, it's heart. Don't tell me it isn't—I know better."

Graham, intensely amused, sat down.

If this fussy idiot wanted to examine him, the joke was against the fussy idiot. In a moment, however, the doctor lost his fussiness, began to eye Graham critically, to ask certain questions. Graham wished he had explained that, with the exception of his flesh wound, there was nothing the matter with him. Now, it seemed as if he were making an ass of himself. When he decided to explain, the little doctor curtly told him to keep quiet and not argue, but to answer the questions put to him.

Graham, in spite of his iron nerve, began to feel ill at ease. The little doctor closed his mouth with the click of a steel trap. He did not look like a man who would take a joke at his own expense, especially when he opened Graham's waistcoat, and, with great earnestness, examined his heart.

"Oh, this is too ridiculous," thought Graham. "I'm hanged if I stand this miniature hornet buzzing round me any longer." He glanced up at the little man, and saw that he was intensely in earnest—that he was not to be trifled with. Those angry eyes made him feel uncomfortable. Graham decided that it would be simpler to pay the doctor's fee, and have a laugh at his expense when Harcourt came back from Sandringham.

The little dark doctor left off sounding Graham's heart. There was even a kind of professional compassion in his curt tones. He made three or four strange movements with his hands, and Graham felt as if rushing waters were closing over him.

"That's the worst of you military men. You take too much out of yourselves—strain yourselves to pieces. Then you come to us to patch you up, and expect to be all right again in a week or two." His eyes were normal now; their anger faded away, and he regarded Graham with kindly compassion. "You've never thought of taking care of your heart? Evidently. Don't say you have, because I know very well you haven't."

"Well," Graham carelessly admitted, "if you're campaigning, you can't ex-

pect it to be all 'beer and skittles.' Kitchener often chucked in an extra bit of work when we thought we'd finished. Extra bits were turning up all the time."

"Just like him. Wish I had him here to tell him what I think of that little extra bit," murmured the doctor. His eyes blazed again. "I'd work him. I'd make him believe all sorts of things."

"Ah, you don't know him. He's not the sort of man to whom you can tell things. He generally does all the telling that's necessary, himself."

The little doctor towered above Graham, and his eyes flashed. "My dear sir, if Lord Kitchener were here, I'd tell him exactly what I thought of him."

"I dare say he'd be equally frank with you in return. You can never mistake his meaning."

Graham began to button his waistcoat, then felt for some loose gold, and wondered how much he was expected to pay for this somewhat dreary farce.

"You're very brave." The little doctor regarded him admiringly. "Few men could go through so great an ordeal and display such fine indifference to the result. I don't believe even I could frighten you. Perhaps you think I've been trying to do so."

"Frighten me! No, of course you couldn't."

"What on earth is the man talking about!" Graham thought, as he put down two guineas on the table.

"Don't tempt me to try, or you'll regret it—bitterly regret it, some day. Harcourt's fee is five guineas," snapped the doctor, whirling his hands like a windmill, and again Graham felt as if submerged by many waters. "Most patients have the decency to put the fee into an envelope."

"Aren't you afraid they'd substitute peppermint-drops instead? Come to think of it, it's rather like providing a velvet scabbard for the sword that runs through you. Most people like to be paid for their work. I do myself. I don't grumble about the way in which the money reaches me."

The little doctor fussily wrote out a prescription. Now that his back was turned, Graham felt able to breathe again. "Take this to the nearest chemist and have it made up at once." He looked keenly at Graham, who momentarily became confused. Something seemed to be impressed upon him against his will—something which robbed him of his vitality and against which he could make no resistance.

"Take it to the chemist! What for?"

"To have it made up, of course. Don't argue with me, sir. Take it."

"Oh, all right. What for?"

Graham, with a steady hand, picked up the sheet of paper, resolving to throw it away directly he quitted the house. "I'll make Harty disgorge the money to-morrow, the greedy beggar!" he murmured. "Catch me giving that little scrub five guineas!"

"What for?" snapped the doctor, in amazement. "What for? Well, if you don't soon have it made up, you'll be past praying for. I simply will not answer for the consequences. Don't you feel the symptoms?" Again, his hands made queer semicircular movements.

"Oh, come! This is ridiculous! Do you mean to say there is really anything the matter with me?"

"Ridiculous! Anything the matter! Of course, there's something the matter." The doctor regarded him compassionately, and yet with a certain exultation. "You're the bravest man I have ever met—even I can't frighten you. But that's because you don't know what I've done to you. Your pulse beats normally, you look utterly indifferent. Either you value your life very lightly, or you are in complete ignorance of what is really the matter with you."

"I came in—" Graham hesitated.

In the doctor's face was what appeared to be a look of genuine compassion. Then his eyes began to blaze again.

"Heart-disease," he snapped. "That's what's the matter with you. Be careful, or you may drop dead any

moment. Now, are you frightened? Get this prescription made up immediately, avoid all excitement, and live temperately."

"What!" Graham's bronzed visage showed his amazement. "Heart-disease! Nothing to frighten one in that."

"You hear what I said," snapped the little tyrant. "Haven't I spoken plainly enough? You've received your marching orders from a greater than Lord Kitchener. All I can do is to help you to delay the start for a little."

He spoke as if reluctant to condemn the handsome, stalwart specimen of humanity before him. His manner changed so frequently that he conveyed the impression of having two individualities.

Graham leisurely finished buttoning his other glove. Better leave the doctor to his mistake, and get away from the peremptory little ghoul. But, as he turned to quit the room, he felt a sudden pang in his heart, and went blue at the lips. The doctor triumphantly rushed to a side table, hastily poured out something, and made Graham swallow it.

"Ah, I was sure of it. I was afraid I had been a little abrupt. Ever had one of these attacks before?"

"No—I have never had one of these attacks before. A man always feels a bit excited going into action, you know, but I've never felt like this."

"No, of course you haven't. Well, you're fighting a losing battle, but don't get stirred up about it. That's the one thing you must not do."

"Oh, I'll humor the fierce-eyed, windmill-handed little brute," thought Graham, "and tell Harcourt all about it. He should be more careful when he gets a substitute. Still, he might be vexed if he thought I'd made such an ass of this fellow, who ought to be in an asylum. Looks as if he really wanted to make me believe I had heart-disease, confound him!"

The doctor handed him his hat, and bowed.

Graham also bowed.

"Thanks for your advice. It surprised me a little."

"I generally surprise most people," said the little man. "Sometimes, I surprise myself. Now, remember to keep yourself quiet and avoid all emotion. Otherwise—I!" He paused, significantly.

"Otherwise?"

"There will be no 'otherwise.'" His eyes lost their fiery look, and became sad again. "No 'otherwise,'" he repeated, mechanically. "Have you ever thought what that means? What it is when there is no 'otherwise'?"

"No, I haven't. Good afternoon." Graham bowed, stiffly. His manner showed how much he disliked the doctor, and the doctor's manner showed how much he disliked Graham. It was a case of mutual antipathy at first sight.

"Good afternoon."

The doctor, after watching him with a triumphant air, began to make jerky notes in a little book on the table, and Graham went down the staircase, not knowing whether to laugh or be angry at this sorry exhibition of medical incompetence.

He walked lightly down Harley street toward the West End. "After all," he thought, cheerfully, "such an experience is disagreeable, but it does a fellow good to be pulled up like that; otherwise, he might get careless and forget that he must come to an end some day. What a ridiculous little beggar! He'd eyes like a panther's in the dark. Some of these doctors must be humbugs. I—! What—!"

He suddenly went white, and leaned against a lamp-post, then crawled into a shop, and sat down to recover himself.

The shopkeeper brought him a glass of water, and Graham swallowed it at a gulp.

"I'm all right," he said. "Just a sudden faintness, that's all. Wound not quite healed up yet." And the pretty girls in the shop looked at him with worship. He was a real hero fresh from the wars.

But, as Graham went out into the bustle of Regent street, he could not

help feeling how extraordinary it was for him to have had such an attack so soon after leaving the doctor's. Then he remembered that he had forgotten to eat any luncheon, and speedily reassured himself. "That's it," he said. "I'll write to Harcourt and give him beans. There was something odd about that fellow's eye. I'll let Harty know that, unless he speedily returns to town and looks after his patients properly, there'll be some serious mistakes made. That man will end in a mad-house."

He reached his club, but felt too lazy to write. "I'll tell Veronica all about it at dinner, and ask her advice," he murmured, soothing his irritated nerves with a cigar. "She knows by this time, that poor lad, Huntingtower, died of enteric. Very likely Crewe will be dining with her and Mrs. Marjoribanks to-night. Better go and look him up on my way to Grosvenor square."

III

IN THE ALBANY

ALGY CREWE was irritable. Something seemed to upset him. By that natural but unwritten law which guides most men and all women, he speedily arrived at the conclusion that it was his mission to upset some one else—some one who could not resent his unpleasantness. The nearest person to be made uncomfortable was his man, Wayne. Beyond an occasional wriggle, Wayne could not help himself, but bore torture with all the stoicism of a Red Indian. Actuated by this pleasing impulse, from time to time, Crewe suspended his dressing in order to give Wayne as much suffering as possible.

Wayne, a thin, active little lightweight, his smooth-shaven lips compressed with vexation, was not pleasant to look at. He had the appearance of a man who would cheerfully have poisoned his master, had such a thing been possible without risking his own neck to do it. Crewe treated him like a

dog, although Wayne knew all his secrets. The mere fact that Wayne knew enough to damage Crewe with his guardian—Crewe always called the major "Uncle," although he was no relation at all—only made Crewe more reckless. He seemed to think Wayne a kind of human cockchafer, who not only ought to consider it an honor to be twirled on a pin, but who ought to provide the necessary pin. Wayne, although clenching his teeth with suppressed fury, outwardly acquiesced in this view; it was only another item in the long account which he had against his master, an account for which he meant to secure a receipt in full some day—a receipt of his own fashioning. How he was to do it, he did not quite know; but he had a vague idea that Crewe required only a little more rope in order ultimately to secure a longer one at the hands of the common executioner. And so he suffered in silence while handing Crewe his things.

As he dressed, Crewe continued his savage valet-baiting. He had hoped that, like Harry Huntingtower, Graham would not return from South Africa, and his opinion of Boer marksmanship had suffered a severe shock. Surely Graham was big enough for even a Boer to hit from behind a kopje! It seemed to him that he ought to have taken service with the Boers and have trusted to providence to throw Graham in his path. Then he could have "potted" his guardian, thus clearing the way with Veronica Wylde. He could not get over the sneaking consciousness that Veronica admired Graham, in spite of his being ten years older than herself. Also Veronica—she had a habit of speaking her mind with biting scorn when she considered it necessary—frequently expressed her opinion about young men who did not "Ear their country's call," as one of Mr. Kipling's heroes puts it. In vain, Crewe, with thinly-veiled reluctance, declared Graham to be a professional butcher whose duty it was to cut the throats of his country's enemies.

"Then, why don't you go and help

him?" Veronica had retorted, with a sudden and unscrupulous change of front. "You've nothing to do."

"But it takes me so long doing it," Crewe lazily replied. "Besides, I never was good at cutting up things."

"I believe you are a coward," Veronica suggested, for the second time, with a fierce look in her beautiful dark eyes. "It nearly makes me die of shame to believe that your guardian's ward could be so base."

"It's so much more comfortable not to believe unpleasant things," suggested Crewe.

"Then you don't deny it?" she flashed.

"My dear Veronica, the time will come, as they say in transpontine drama, when I hope to prove to you that you are mistaken. I—I'm delicate. You know all my mother's people have heart disease sooner or later. Sometimes, it's sooner."

"The time may come when fresh men will be needed, but you won't come with it."

There was a good deal of unconscious bitterness in Veronica's tone. She had known Cousin Crewe since childhood, but it was new to her to understand that he was a coward. It would have been newer still for her to realize that he needed nothing but opportunity to become a villain. In discussing the matter with his inner consciousness, Crewe always maintained that what was villainy in a man with ten thousand a year became comparative rectitude in one with only five hundred.

Crewe did not look at all like the ordinary conventional villain, for he was a dapper, fair-haired, well-shaped man of about eight-and-twenty, with a pleasant, vacuous face and an eye-glass which afforded him his most arduous occupation in life—that of maintaining it in his right eye. As a matter of fact, he could see better without it, but he did not like the world to make the discovery. He was mean in his friendships, mean in his pleasures, mean in his loves and hates—and he had more hates than loves.

Sometimes Crewe afflicted Veronica with a sense of intolerable shame. This was when he implied that he loved her, that he wanted to marry her. When she could not sleep, she peered through the darkness, reconstructed Crewe, wondering what particular kind of evil lurked behind the framework of his innocent-looking personality. The soft, silky voice, the blond hair, neatly parted in the middle, the swinging eye-glass, the white, even teeth, full, red lips and trim little nose—a nose which suggested a sparrowhawk's bill—filled her with indefinable alarm. She felt that the evil which dwelt in Crewe was the baser because of its being so carefully hidden. She wanted to tear aside the mask, be sure that he was all she imagined him to be, rather than feel that he had never given her any excuse for doubting him.

Of course, the world regarded him as a good-natured ass, dependent upon his guardian's bounty for a livelihood. There was no necessity for Graham to maintain Crewe in idleness, except that the latter was one of those ineffectual people who have never learned to work. Veronica felt sure that Crewe wanted her money; that he wanted Graham's money; that he would stick at nothing, should the opportunity arise, to get money. He was naturally indolent, and desired to live comfortably at the world's expense. Five hundred a year was better than nothing, but it did not come up to his ideas of comfort. From his own point of view, the world had not treated him fairly. Graham had plenty of money; Veronica did not know what to do with hers, she had so much; and yet he, Crewe, was dependent on Graham's generosity for a paltry five hundred a year in addition to the hundred a year which Graham administered for him. His allowance of five hundred was purely gratuitous and optional on Graham's part. If Graham were to quarrel with him, or to marry, away would go the allowance. Crewe would be reduced to addressing envelopes at sixpence a thousand for a livelihood and living in a common "doss house."

From what he had seen of doss houses, he did not like them. There was a crudeness about them which filled him with dismay. Their frequenters, too, lacked the culture of the clubs, and were strangers to the outward application of soap and water.

At last, Crewe left off bullying Wayne, in order to read for the tenth time the telegram which lay on his dressing-table:

Back again late last night. Look you up before dinner. Dining with Veronica.

GRAHAM.

So Graham had come back, and his first visit was to Veronica. Here was another injustice to Crewe. Now that enteric had settled Huntingtower's pretensions forever, he had meant to propose to Veronica that very night; and then entered this South African butcher, redolent of blood and tawdry khaki, to spoil sport and pose as a hero. No wonder Wayne had an uncomfortable quarter of an hour.

It was only after Wayne had turned upon him with teeth showing like a wildcat's, that Crewe began to feel better. Wayne had just put him into his overcoat, and was pulling down the collar at the back. The tension of his lithe, little frame, as he hovered behind Crewe, the nervous twitching of his long, lean fingers, showed how dangerous he was. Wayne was a man of few ideas. It took years to get a new one into him. When he did assimilate it, the idea stayed, became a part of him, his only rule of conduct. A long course of Crewe's gratuitous bullying had gradually forced the conviction upon Wayne that Crewe was his enemy. He hated him. Crewe, on his part, although a coward, took a delight in provoking Wayne's hatred, well knowing how helpless the man was to resent it. Wayne made up his mind to resent it—some day. Now, he was patiently waiting for the day to come. When it did arrive, he would not make any mistakes.

Crewe finished buttoning his overcoat, and looked at himself with dissatisfaction. "You never can turn me out properly. There's a hair on my

coat. I wonder why I keep you," he snarled.

"Why, sir?"

"Yes—why?"

"I don't eat much, and I'm useful," said Wayne. "Useful—and cheap."

"Cheap! You! You'd be dear at any price. Hand me my gloves, and don't presume to answer back again. Do you call that hat brushed? Give me an umbrella that hasn't been opened. You never can roll one properly. D'you hear?"

Wayne brought the gloves, hat and umbrella in silence. Crewe, after a final look at himself in the glass, put on his hat, and turned away to go out.

"Oh, by the way," he said, picking up the telegram, carefully putting it into the envelope, and refastening it, "if Major Graham calls, say I dressed at the club, and that you haven't seen me since four o'clock this afternoon. I want to get off before he comes. You hear?"

Wayne took the telegram in his usual stupid way. "There's some one knocking now."

Crewe paused, irresolutely, for he wanted to hurry off and secure half an hour's tête-à-tête with Veronica before the major appeared on the scene. "Oh, very well. Give me back the telegram. I expect it is the major. Show him in."

He flung the telegram fiercely into the fire, looked in the glass to make sure that his features wore a joyous expression, then rushed into the passage. "My dear guardian!" he said, wringing Graham's hand with fervor. "Come into the light. Let me look at you. Back safe and sound! This is too good to be true. Come in! come in! We've half an hour yet. Come in!"

He hurried the major, somewhat overwhelmed by the unexpected warmth of his reception, into the room. "Wayne!" he cried, "don't you see it's the major back again?"

"Yes, sir," said Wayne, stolidly. "I see, sir."

Somehow his tone sounded more real

than Crewe's. Its satisfaction was not so forced.

The major did not altogether approve of Crewe, but was touched by his fervor, and thought better of him than he had ever done before. At the same time, he could not help wishing that Crewe would look a little more manly and a little less like a spaniel.

But Crewe, bustling about on hospitable thoughts intent, seemed the very embodiment of joyousness.

"That's right, that's right. Sherry and bitters, Wayne. Sherry and bitters, and look sharp about it. It's a cold night. You'll want a pick-me-up, major."

Wayne hastily brought the sherry and bitters, and the major, his back to the fire, was about to drink, as they clinked glasses.

Crewe stopped him.

"To Veronica," he said, with hidden meaning; "to Veronica."

The major looked at him. Something in Crewe's tone struck him as unusual.

"Seen much of her lately?" he asked, in a voice which he strove to render indifferent.

"Yes." Crewe hesitated, artistically. "The fact is—I—I don't like to talk about it. You understand!"

"Can't say I do. Devilish good sherry this." The major abruptly put down his glass. "You were saying?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing. Only, Veronica and I seem to have——"

"Oh!" The major might have been talking about the weather. "Very good stuff of yours that sherry, Algy. We'd better have another glass to keep the cold out."

"That will stop him from saying anything to Veronica for a time," thought Crewe. "In common decency, he can't propose to her until she undeceives him. Now, if I can only make her believe he's in love with some one else! He can't say I've been lying to him, because I've told him nothing. I've only hinted. If he gets nasty about it, it's always easy to say he misunderstood me."

Wayne went out with the glasses, and the major looked round the room. "Fine collection of photographs," he said. "Very lightly clad, though, for this weather. By the way, we needn't start for a quarter of an hour. I'm keeping my cab."

"It's expensive," Crewe suggested, thereby hinting he did not often indulge in such luxuries.

"Oh, well, in a little while, you won't have to consider questions of that sort." The major looked thoughtfully into the fire.

Crewe's heart beat wildly. "Is it possible that you are good enough to increase my allowance?"

"Looks as if I can't help myself. Hang it all, Algy, I've had a facer this afternoon. A facer!"

"Lost some money?" queried Crewe, disconsolately. And yet, if the major had lost his money, how could he talk of increasing the allowance?

"Money? No, lad, no. There are other things one can lose as well as money." He gazed abstractedly at the wall.

Crewe waited for him to speak.

"I went down to see Harcourt this afternoon as I was passing Harley street. They showed me in to a wild-eyed man called Powerscourt, who was taking his work. Harcourt was away."

Crewe listened with indifference. "That's the man who is great on hypnotism. I suppose Harcourt had been sent for somewhere?"

"Yes; Sandringham. Some foreign potentate was ill there, and Harcourt had to go down in a hurry."

"A pity you missed him."

"Yes. No, thanks, I won't smoke now. I was shown into a room, and the fellow there took me for a patient."

Crewe pricked up his ears. "There's a lot of humbug about doctors. Ye-es?"

"Told me I'd heart disease, and couldn't live long. That's all. I thought you'd like to know."

"Of—course. But—but wasn't he mistaken? There's heart disease in my family, too."

"I laughed when I got outside.

Then I really had a pain in my heart. The beggar must have been right."

"Hard luck, after going through the campaign and getting the D.S.O."

"Oh, well"—the major spoke quietly enough—"some fellows had harder luck than that. Think of poor Huntingtower! He never had a chance. You'll step into my shoes, you know!"

"I don't want to think——"

"No, of course you don't. Not a word of this, mind, to Veronica. It would only upset her."

"You may be sure I sha'n't breathe a word."

Crewe turned away to hide the sparkle in his eyes. The good news was too much for him. He turned ghastly pale, staggered, and leaned helplessly against the wall.

The major sprang toward him in alarm. "What's the matter, lad? What's the matter? I thought you'd take it more pluckily."

"So—did—I. But—it's—it's so—sudden." Crewe pulled himself together with an effort. His face was ghastly.

"Pooh! If a soldier has to go, he likes to go suddenly. Time's up. Not a word to Veronica, mind."

"Not a word."

Wayne preceded them down-stairs to open the door. When the hansom dashed away into the darkness, he looked bewildered. "What's it all mean?" he wondered, for he had been listening at the keyhole; "what's it all mean?" 'Twasn't the major looked like dying. 'Twas him, curse him!" He shook a malevolent fist after the rapidly disappearing vehicle.

Wayne shut the door, and, lighting one of Crewe's best cigars, sat down to think the matter over. Then he went to the sideboard, and poured himself out a glass of sherry and bitters. "I can't see daylight," he repeated, from time to time. "I can't see daylight. If I can put a spoke in master's wheel—! Ah! if I can only put a spoke in his wheel!"

He contemptuously flicked Crewe's photograph off the mantelpiece, and

was about to tear it in two. "No, he'd miss it, and stop it out of my wages. If Miss Veronica didn't tip me every time I went up to the house, I shouldn't be able to live at all, bless her!"

He looked reverently at a portrait of Veronica which stood beside Crewe's, then moved it as far away as possible. "I'd rather see you dead, miss, than marry him," he groaned. "You sha'n't if I can help it. Where's the cigar-box? Think I can't open it, does he! I'll show him!"

Regardless of consequences, he abstracted another cigar. The box was guarded by a patent lock which was supposed to render theft impossible. Wayne opened it with the ease of a practised cracksmen, then fastened the box again.

"He may think a lot, but he can't prove anything," he said, with a thoughtful grin. "Not him! I'll smoke this one in bed, with my head under the clothes; then he won't smell it."

IV

VERONICA

BLUE-EYED, fluffy-haired Mrs. Marjoribanks—she always said that the way her name was pronounced gave uneducated people the impression that she did not know how to spell—knocked at Veronica's door in an airy, innocent way which meant mischief. Although she was in the habit of telling people that her chief claim to distinction lay in being Veronica's aunt, Veronica puzzled her. She wanted to know her niece's inmost thoughts, and Veronica was equally resolved that she would take no one into her confidence. If her aunt wished to find out things she had no business to know, such curiosity must be discouraged.

But Mrs. Marjoribanks, although she owed all the comfort she got out of life to Veronica's kindness, could not repress her curiosity. It seemed unnatural that such a beautiful girl should remain so curiously apathetic when lovers came to woo. Veronica

affected to believe that they were merely friends, and Mrs. Marjoribanks wished to know the meaning of this affectation. It was absurd that a girl, young, beautiful, rich, should preserve the temperament of an iceberg which declines to melt even when under the influence of Summer suns. All that interested Veronica seemed to be the Boer War. Now that the war was a thing of the past, it was time that Veronica should become like the Boers, and settle down. Several men had mistaken her interest in military tactics for a more personal one. Mrs. Marjoribanks was beginning to grow tired of having to hint to these warlike wooers that her niece's interest in them was purely impersonal. The warlike wooers protested that their interest in Veronica was of a far different nature. They wanted Mrs. Marjoribanks to explain this to Veronica, but Veronica never allowed her aunt to explain; she said that, as a rule, military tactics were far more interesting than "the military," and she could not understand how they—"the military"—had ever thought otherwise. Thus, foiled in her attempt to pave the way for various brilliant warriors, Mrs. Marjoribanks at length declined to have anything to do with Veronica's love-affairs; she said they were too frigid. Besides, all her own spare time was occupied in training Professor Cheyne to observe social conventions. Every now and again, just as she had imparted a little superficial polish to the professor, he "threw back," as it were, and she had to begin all over again.

But, on the evening after Major Graham's return to town, Mrs. Marjoribanks noticed the change in Veronica, who seemed to glow and radiate sunshine as she despatched an answer to Graham's telegram announcing his arrival at Southampton. Veronica's telegram to the major invited him to come to dinner the next night and tell her of the dangers he had passed. She did not finish the quotation, which was just as well, for telegraph clerks are likely to become confused when

confronted with poetical sentiment instead of stock-exchange quotations. All the afternoon, Mrs. Marjoribanks had been indulging in the, for her, unusual arithmetical occupation of putting two and two together. As a result of this mental feat, she could not decide whether two and two made three or five. She determined, by means of various insidious wiles, to get Veronica's unconscious assistance in the matter, so went up to her niece's boudoir and entered hastily before Veronica could remove the major's photograph from the table. Poor Huntingtower's portrait had a little niche in the wall to itself, for Veronica had never forgotten his promise "to look after Graham."

"Is that you, aunt?" Veronica asked, in rather amazed tones. "You know I always like to be alone for a little while before dinner."

"Yes, my dear, I know. Solitude prepares one for a proper appreciation of the good dinner to come. At the same time, I also know that it is not good for man to be alone," sententiously remarked Mrs. Marjoribanks, under the impression that she was quoting something very profound.

"But, you see, aunt, I'm not a man—I'm a woman. At least, all your military friends seem to think so."

"Well, it isn't good for a woman to be alone, either—she's no one to talk to," inconsequently added Mrs. Marjoribanks, sinking into an easy-chair.

"I thought that this kind of thing had been threshed out long ago in the Garden of Eden," said Veronica, rather wearily.

"Yes, my dear. Yes, I dare say it has, although there weren't any uniforms in the garden. Besides, we've advanced so much that I don't think fruit tempts any woman nowadays. You see, it's always in season, and a woman likes to eat things out of season. Otherwise, there's no pleasure in them. After all, my dear, it wasn't fruit which led to Eve's downfall—it was the serpent's conversational powers. You see, Adam was a good deal occupied in agricultural pursuits, con-

sequently, he was not much of a talker, unless you believe Milton, who never let poor Eve get in a word edgeways. Any woman with a Miltonic husband would be justified in adopting the serpentine path to destruction. Women always appreciate wit, sparkle, epigram in a man; they don't want to be bored. And I am given to understand that there were no shops when Fall fashions first came into vogue. Shops are so highly moral in their unconscious influence over us. Give a woman her choice of looking at shops or a handsome man, and, in nine cases out of ten, she will choose the shops. The shops aren't thinking of themselves. In nine cases out of ten, a handsome man never thinks of anything but himself. That is why I want to marry an ugly man like the professor. I shall be able to provide all the beauty necessary in the establishment; the professor will confine himself to providing the establishment."

Veronica roused herself with an amused look, as she went over to the fireplace and sat down in a low chair. "Do you know, auntie, I believe that if you had been born a man, you would have been what Algy calls 'a thoroughly bad lot.'"

"Then I should only have entered upon the heritage of most men," retorted Mrs. Marjoribanks, gracefully lounging opposite Veronica. "After all, my dear, you mustn't blame the men, for we can't help letting them see that the bad ones are always so much more attractive than the good. In her heart, a woman always admires a dash of devil. Good men are like the good heroines of a novel. You know just what they are going to do in any circumstances, whereas your bad men are always ready to kick over the traces—"

"Auntie! auntie! At your age, too!" Veronica stretched lovely white arms above her head. "You really have a brilliant imagination, but you mix your metaphors. Horses kick over the traces, not men."

"Not always."

"What do you mean?"

"Sometimes, it's asses," ungrammatically declared Mrs. Marjoribanks. She got up, walked about the room, and audibly commented upon the photographs scattered about. "'Portrait of Major Graham, on his favorite hunter, Devilshoof.' H'm, very good. 'Portrait of Major Graham in uniform.' Mess jacket a bit tight. 'Portrait of Major Graham, mowing the lawn at Rendlesham.' Lawn looks as if he'd been trying to shave it with a patent razor, and couldn't manage the corners. 'Portrait of Major Graham leaning over side of trooper 'Serapis.' Wistful expression of major's right eye very fine. 'Por—'" She broke off, suddenly. "Seems to be a good deal of the major about this room, Veronica, although you don't care for military men, as a rule."

Veronica did not appear to hear. She was looking into the fire, with half-closed eyes.

"Seems to be a good deal of the major about this room," repeated Mrs. Marjoribanks, with a daring which astonished herself.

Veronica still did not appear to hear. Mrs. Marjoribanks was about to repeat her remark for the third time, when Veronica roused herself from her abstraction. "Have I ever been deliberately unkind to you, auntie?"

"Never," said Mrs. Marjoribanks, with conviction. "You've always been the dearest girl in the world."

"Have I ever said anything unpleasant to remind you of the position you occupy in my house?"

"Never," repeated Mrs. Marjoribanks, uneasily, seeing that she had gone too far.

"Well, I shall say something very unkind indeed," Veronica declared, with distinct traces of bitterness in her voice, "if you make any remarks about the furniture of this room."

"I shouldn't call photographs furniture unless they were very wooden indeed. Veronica?" Mrs. Marjoribanks came round to the hearth-rug.

"Well?"

"I'm so sorry, my dear. It all

comes of my wanting to pump you about the major."

"I know. You shouldn't have done it. I never say anything to you about Professor Cheyne and the way he perpetually dangles after you."

"Sometimes, I wish you would. I meant well just now, but it seems I've failed to express my meaning."

"Yes, you've failed—your attempt at expressions was most improper. And you've hurt me."

Mrs. Marjoribanks got down on her knees beside Veronica, and put her arms round her.

"Wasn't it a bit hard, Veronica, to remind me of your—your goodness to me?"

Veronica pushed her gently away. "Yes, it was hard, auntie. I'm sorry. But I'm worried."

"So am I," declared Mrs. Marjoribanks, whimsically. "There's a man I want to marry, and he won't look at me otherwise than if I were a specimen cockchafer on a pin."

"You!" Veronica gazed down at her. "You really want to marry again? Take care, auntie, or it will become a habit."

"Yes; why shouldn't I? You've all the insolence of youth," declared Mrs. Marjoribanks. "Wait until you become a padded edition of yourself at twenty. Then you'll want a little romance, a little sentiment, in your life. People seem to think that, if you're fat, you've no right to be sentimental. Why, ask any novelist and he'll tell you there's nothing like a layer of fat for keeping the sentiment in a woman."

"But you're not too fat."

"No, I am only inclined to what people call 'embongpong.'" She began to laugh. "After all, you are the middle-aged woman, Veronica. I am the young girl bubbling over with sentiment, with the desire to be loved, to have a man think all the world of me. I want to be wooed by some one who will see into my heart and find it as youthful as your body. I've been a widow ten years. Ten years! And I don't like it. The late lamented was

not all that he ought to have been, but he did worship me in spite of his—well, eccentricities. And it is such a comfort to have a man in the house. The very look of his hats in the hall seems to strengthen one. Men may not be reasonable creatures, but they are muscular; and a woman always respects a man whom she has goaded into nearly knocking her down, when he just doubles his fists and doesn't do it. She knows he ought to do it, and is a little bit frightened at her own daring."

"You seem to have had rather a stormy matrimonial career!"

"Stormy! It is all halcyon days when I look back upon it. Nothing makes a woman's life so interesting as having a man to please or displease. It's an experiment you ought to make, Veronica." She got up and stood looking down upon the girl's dark hair, her magnificent eyes, her clear complexion and regular features. "Men may be a bit of a nuisance sometimes, but life is much more of a nuisance without them. It's so dull."

"Is it?"

Veronica again became absorbed in the fire. She was not interested in abstract questions.

"It is; and if the professor—stupid old—old fossilized mummy—doesn't propose to me, in self-defense I shall propose to him. I'm not going to be 'a lily maid of Astolat' kind of creature, and fade away. It—it would take such a time for me to fade. Have you ever noticed a big pair of shooting-boots in my room?"

"Ye-es, I have. They seemed out of place."

"I look at those boots every day, and wish they weren't empty," Mrs. Marjoribanks declared, with conviction. "I want a man to bully and tease and love and quarrel with. I'm tired of this cat-in-an-arm-chair kind of life."

"Do you mean you want some one to scratch?"

"Yes—and then make it up again. Rather than go down to my grave a widow, I'd cheerfully marry a chim-

ney-sweeper. Even then, life couldn't be blacker than it is without one."

"Why?" asked Veronica, without the light of enthusiasm in her eyes. "You know this thirst for matrimony isn't womanly. If we women like a man, we must keep it to ourselves."

"Must we? Well, I sha'n't. I shall confide it to him. He's the proper person to know about it. After all, a woman's thirst for matrimony is only the outward and visible sign of the inward invisible grace which prompts her to make a man happy. But, oh, Veronica, I do wish he would come along. Sometimes, I feel tempted to advertise for him. I told Professor Cheyne the last time he was here that no woman's life was complete without a man to guide her. But, then, he's not a man—he's only a primordial, atomic, monkeyified globule."

"And what did he say?"

"He said"—she began to laugh in spite of her vexation—"oh, he said, 'It's a very proper spirit of humility, Mistress March-banks.' I—I could have thrown one of his ancestors at him—I mean a monkey—only there weren't any handy."

"Did he say anything else?"

"Oh, yes; he confided to me that he is writing a book on the 'Proper Subjection of Woman.'"

"He is an old bachelor. What does he know about it?"

"A good deal more than he did a few weeks ago. Veronica, he's actually had his hair cut. Isn't that a sign of saving grace? He looks almost civilized."

"Who does?"

"The professor. But it is time for me to dress. I see you've already done so."

"Yes, dear."

"Well, I must be going. It takes time to get into that pink silk, for neither of us will give way, or stretch a point to accommodate the other."

Veronica made no reply. Suddenly, Mrs. Marjoribanks came back, and, bending down, kissed her on the lips.

"My dear, my dear, I want you to be very happy."

Mrs. Marjoribanks's pretty face flushed, her blue eyes shone with the light of enthusiasm. "Don't marry that little worm," she implored. "Yes, I must say it. Don't marry Algy. I'd rather see you in your grave. Now, turn me away, if you like, and send me into lodgings in Bloomsbury to starve. I dare say the professor would come and feed me on British Museum sandwiches. He gave me a British Museum sandwich once, and, until he undeceived me, I thought it was a flint axe-head with which he wanted to woo me."

Veronica kissed her, gratefully. "You sha'n't live on axe-heads. And you mustn't mind my moods. I'm rather worried. I feel as you do about Algy, yet I have nothing to go upon. He puzzles me."

"He doesn't puzzle me." Mrs. Marjoribanks was half-way to the door. "I'm going to watch him. What a pity the major is so blind!"

"So blind?"

"Yes, blind as a bat. But, I forgot, I mustn't talk about him." And she glided away.

Veronica waited until her aunt had disappeared. Then she walked to the table, and gravely regarded the major's photograph, looked into the honest eyes, wistful with the sadness of parting from her.

"You are a good man," she said; "a good man. Duty is ever your watchword. The petty meanness and temptations of the world touch you not. You are Galahad, with a touch of the dreamer, the visionary, gentle as a woman, sweet-tempered as a child, blind—blind as a bat. Oh, George, you do not know how blind you are."

She bent over the table, took the photograph in her hands, and pressed it to her lips. "You went away from me to serve your country, put aside all thought of self, said nothing to me although my heart was breaking for you. You made light of suffering, hardship, disaster; you never faltered, never doubted you would win through in the end. And you nursed that poor dying boy although you were wounded your-

self. And now you have come back to me! If you were ever away from me again, I could not bear it. I have been lonely so long—have born the suspense, the anguish, the cruel uncertainty from day to day. Sometimes, I saw you dead, sometimes, wounded, lying out on the veldt with no one to succor you, your only shelter the stars, no hand to bind your wounds, no lips to speak words of comfort and of hope. George! George! You must never leave me again."

Her maid knocked at the door.

"Yes, Simmons? What is it?"

"The major, madam. He has come back."

"I am coming down directly." She turned to the mirror, and hardly recognized herself. Her cheeks were flushed, her great eyes shining. The corners of her proud mouth broke into a little smile. She was radiant, transformed, her heart beat quickly with happiness. He had come back!

She ran lightly down the stairs, softly opened the door, went toward him with outstretched hands. Involuntarily, he took her in his arms; their lips met.

"Good evening, Veronica," said Algy's silky voice, with a certain amount of spitefulness in it. "Wish I'd gone to the wars, too."

Veronica drew away from the major's embrace. He stood looking at her, appealingly.

"After all, I am only human, Veronica. Forgive me."

"Forgive you! I am proud of you. Accept my homage." Algy writhed as the major's eyes met hers. Somehow, they made him feel smaller than usual—more of a contemptible, scheming villain.

"This is my reward," the major said, quietly. "Veronica, it is good to see you again; but I—I have come back alone. That poor boy, Huntingtower——!"

"I know—I know. But you have come back. You have come back!"

"I would have come back from the grave to you! From the grave, Veronica!"

Suddenly, he remembered, and turned away. Her fresh young beauty made his heart ache. Never before had he kissed her, not even in the hour of parting.

Mrs. Marjoribanks's entrance created a much-needed diversion, for Algy was livid with rage.

"Algy, you've trodden on my dress," she screamed; and gave Veronica and the major time to recover themselves. "Major, you promised to bring me a lock of Kruger's hair. You know you did. Where is it? Yes, and you may kiss me, too, if you like. Mustachios and I have long—regrettably long—been strangers to each another."

And, in a moment, the spell was broken, but it must be confessed that the major's salute was rather tepid. Veronica, laughingly regarding Mrs. Marjoribanks, became her customary self, save for heightened color and shining eyes.

"Dinner, madam," said the footman, apologetically, as if it were no time for mere feeding when the major had returned. The other servants, under various pretexts, came as near the drawing-room door as they dared.

"Dinner—at a moment like this when the returning hero embraces his friends. Some people would expect to dine in the midst of an earthquake," declared Mrs. Marjoribanks. "Now I come to think of it, I'm famished. No, no, Algy, give me your arm. The major takes in Veronica." And she dexterously captured the reluctant Algy before he could approach Veronica.

"Come and see me to-morrow morning," said Veronica, as the major offered his arm. "I want to know all about the dangers you have passed."

"And he loved her that she did pity them," inaudibly murmured the irrepressible Mrs. Marjoribanks. "Now, Algy, don't stand gnawing your mustache like a stage villain, or you'll be 'resulted and treated with ironing,' as Mrs. Slipslop says. Are we never to get any dinner to-night? One would think that the major was starving in

Mafeking instead of our feasting him in London."

"To-morrow!" thought the major, as Veronica lightly placed her hand upon his arm. How little she knew what the morrow might bring forth! Her hand trembled on his coat-sleeve, her eyes looked into his with a light they had never worn before. "To-morrow!" he echoed, bitterly, to himself. "To-morrow! Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we—die!" But he was living, with all the fullness of life before him—to-night. To-night was his. Let the morrow take care of itself. Fate owed him one evening of happiness.

"You will come to lunch to-morrow?" Veronica asked, softly.

"Yes, I will come to say——"

She looked up with a happy smile.

"Say it to-morrow, George. Say it to-morrow, or I shall hear it in dreams all night."

V

"TO-MORROW"

"NONSENSE, of course you're not returning to the Métropole," Crewe had said to Graham, earlier in the evening. "You are going to share my quarters with me. I've told Wayne to sleep down-stairs. You take my room, I have his. From what the doctor said, it is evidently important for you to be kept quiet. How can you keep quiet in a place where people are coming and going all day? Impossible. Wayne will have all your things arranged for you by the time we get back."

Graham, as he thanked Crewe, began to feel that his ward had developed a number of unexpected good points. When he went up to bed, worn out with the emotions of the day, his face had lost its bronzed look, and was ghastly. "Nice sort of fellow I am," he said, regarding himself critically in the glass, "if I can't take a facer like a man instead of whining about it. But—Veronica!"

Wayne valeted him with assiduous

attention. Once or twice, he opened his mouth as if to say something; then thought better of it, and shut his lips tightly. The major, however, was too preoccupied to notice this. When Wayne had made him comfortable for the night, Graham gave him a sovereign, and told him to bring his shaving-water at seven. Fatigued by the conflicting emotions of the day, he soon fell asleep, and began to dream of Veronica.

The major was a light sleeper. In the middle of the night something suddenly landed on his chest, dug its claws into him, and leaped to the floor with a yell. Shivering and shaking, his heart going like a sledge-hammer, he got out of bed, struck a light, and discovered a half-starved cat in a corner. He angrily opened the door, drove it out, and locked himself in.

"If this sort of thing is going to upset me, life won't be worth living," he said to himself. "Can't think how that cat got into the room. It couldn't have opened the door for itself."

In the midst of this wondering, his heart ceased to beat with frightful rapidity, and he gradually fell asleep.

Crewe, listening for the sound of a sudden cry from the major's room, congratulated himself on the devilish idea which had prompted him to throw the cat into it, then shrank from the horror of his crime, and covered his head with the bed-clothes. He feared to hear an agonized appeal for help from the major, but Graham was tougher than he thought. "I'll think of something else by to-morrow," he mused, disappointedly. "If I keep on shocking him with a fresh surprise every day, it must tell on him in the long run. A man with a heart like that is bound to drop dead without a moment's notice, and a sudden scare is the best way to bring it about. There's no doubt, whatever, that he ought not to live. He's not a fellow who can enjoy the spending of money as I do. He's always been used to it—it's no pleasure to him—I haven't. Besides, with heart disease, it's absurd to think that he can enjoy living; it's

really doing him a kindness to help him to get rid of his life. Instead of thinking of falling in love with Veronica, he ought to be making his peace with all mankind. Whereas, I am young, lusty, filled with the wine of life, and lack only two things to make me happy. One is the love of Veronica, the other, my guardian's money. And, curiously enough, I fancy that the one depends upon the other. No ducats, no Veronica. In the ordinary course of events, even with heart disease, Graham might be good for another ten years at least. That means that I shall have to live on his beggarly allowance. He'd no business to have been my father's friend if he hadn't intended to make me his heir. If Graham hadn't meant to make a rich man of me, why did he give me expensive tastes—send me to Eton and Oxford? How could I work after that? If he had apprenticed me to an East End institution where they teach a boy to make blacking-brushes and things, I should have been much better equipped for the fray. Not that I ever loved work—seems to me it's only an invention of commonplace people to excuse their own existence."

As they sat at breakfast the next morning, Crewe could see that the major was preoccupied. Crewe, in spite of his self-control, found himself fretful, nervous, irritable, when the major told him of the cat episode.

"The brute must have been under the bed. It's just like Wayne not to have turned it out before. Wayne, why aren't you more careful?"

"No cat in the room when I went away, sir," said Wayne, doggedly, as he handed the major his bacon and kidneys.

"Don't answer me back," almost shouted Crewe. Then, seeing the major's surprised face, "I didn't sleep very well," he lamely declared. "I seemed to have an idea that something was going to happen."

"Take a look round the room to-night, Wayne, and see that the brute doesn't get in again," said the major,

picking up *The Times* as if he were tired of the fuss.

"Yes, sir," said Wayne, almost inaudibly; but his lips moved, and the major, looking up, caught his eyes fixed on himself with an odd mixture of fear and compassion.

When Wayne had left the room, the major threw down the paper, and stretched himself.

"I'll just have a stroll round. Then I'm going to lunch with Veronica. What do you generally do with yourself in the daytime?"

"Oh, I do a little journalism," Crewe untruthfully declared, in order to account for his idle, aimless day.

"That's right," said the major, heartily. "Anything's better than being idle. Bone-idle beggars are always the most helpless."

Crewe did not like being called a "bone-idle beggar," even by implication.

"I'd better meet you at Veronica's," he said, jealously.

"I think not," the major declared, with military decision. "There are several things I want to have a chat with her about, and you'd only be in the way. Some other time, my dear chap; some other time, if you don't mind. You see her every day, I suppose?"

"Yes, of course," said Crewe, lying again. "Considering our relations to each other, I——"

"Ah, yes; it's just those relations about which I wanted to ask you. You rather implied that you were engaged to Veronica?"

"I never said so."

"No; that's why I don't understand it. Are you engaged to her?"

"Yes."

He turned away his face as he said it. Something in his tone seemed to strike the major. "Going to try to make a career for yourself?"

"Ye-es."

But his tone was not sanguine.

"Prove to me that you have made a start," said Graham, preparing to go out, "and I'll quadruple your allowance. You can't live on a girl's

money, and you've none of your own."

In his heart, Crewe did not see why he should not live on a girl's money, especially if that girl happened to be Veronica. But he wrung the major's hand with an air of well-feigned enthusiasm, and declared that he could never sufficiently thank him for his kindness.

"If you only knew how I'd like to show my thanks," he declared, "you'd be astonished."

"Yes, I dare say I should." And with this equally enigmatic utterance, Graham went out. He was beginning to discover that a little of Crewe's society went a very long way. It would not be very pleasant for Veronica if she also grew to be of the same way of thinking.

The major spent an enjoyable morning at his tailor's, ordering this, that and the other, with reckless prodigality. The tailor congratulated him on having come through the campaign in such good form, and Graham, with momentary bitterness, thought how little the man knew about it. For the present, he resolved to make no alteration in his mode of life. Veronica's manner on the previous evening had filled him with such joy that it had thrown all fear of death into the background. The only drawback was this supposed engagement of hers to Crewe. Not the only drawback—there was the heart disease. That was always to be reckoned with.

The major became conscious of a fierce jealousy of Crewe; but this only made him more just. What business had he, a dying man, to come between two young lovers, to fill their days with the bitterness of his own impending doom? And yet, as he drew near Grosvenor square, he felt conscious of an unreasoning grief—a despair almost equal to that with which he had sailed away from Veronica. He was shown into Veronica's little morning-room, and she came to him, shyly, sweetly, slowly, as if to taste the fullness of her joy in coming.

Something in his manner at once

arrested her happiness. The major seemed perplexed, confused, worried. He carried a curious little oblong case in his hand, and laid it on the table.

"Now sit down and talk," said Veronica, with an attempt at gaiety. "You are looking bothered this morning. Has anything gone wrong?"

The major regarded her, searchingly. There was a clear light in her eye, a radiance in her smile which he had never seen before. Crewe had undoubtedly told the truth. He opened the jewel-case, and pushed it toward her. "Here is a little wedding-present for you, Veronica."

Veronica was amazed.

"Is this a jest?"

She shut up the case, and handed it back to him without looking at the sparkling stones.

"No." The major was surprised in his turn. "How should it be! Am I not to have the privilege of an old—friend?"

"Oh, yes, you have many privileges"—Veronica turned upon him almost bitterly—"but I do not know by what right you assume this one."

"Crewe told me—" The major paused, in confusion.

"What did he tell you?"

"He—he hinted that you were engaged to him."

"He said that! Oh!"

"If he did not absolutely say it, he implied as much."

"The—the wretch! And you were in such a hurry to believe him that you brought me this!" She swept the case from the table with an impetuous hand.

"No, I did not want to believe him."

"Why not?"

"Because I——"

"Yes?" Veronica came a little nearer to him. "You did not want to believe him because——?"

The major suddenly sat down, and put his face in his hands. It had dawned upon him that he had no right to speak to her, to link her young life with his.

Veronica spoke softly, sweetly, tenderly. "There is something troubling

you?" She came to his side. "Tell me! What is it?"

The major could not tell her. Veronica's hand was on his shoulder, her warm breath upon his cheek. The sudden conviction seized him that, if he confessed his love, she would accept it. He got up, and faced her squarely.

"Veronica," he said, gravely, "in happier circumstances, I meant to tell you that I loved you—that, night and day, your face has been ever before me. There hasn't been an hour, a minute, even, when I have been free, that I haven't thought of you, haven't pictured this home-coming, haven't dreamed of what I wanted to say to you, of what I hoped you would say to me—and now I can't say it. I dare not."

"You — cannot! Dare not! Are you, then, a coward?"

He flushed a little. Something in the weary light of his eyes smote Veronica with sudden pity and compassion—pity for him, compassion for herself.

"I don't understand. I don't understand. You love me, and yet—" She hesitated.

"I love you, and yet I cannot ask you to marry me."

"It—it is somewhat new to me to sue to any one," she said, haughtily. "For years past, I have believed in you. You shatter my faith at a blow. I do not ask who this other woman is, or where you met her, but when you went away you looked at me as if I were the woman you loved."

"And I meant it, too."

He stepped eagerly toward her. She waved him back.

"You meant it—then. Who is she? When did she first come between us? I have a right to know."

"She! She! What do you mean?"

"Who is the woman who has taken you away from me? Was it some one in South Africa?"

"No woman has ever taken me away from you. There isn't any woman—there never has been any woman—there never will be any other woman!" he

said, impetuously. "If I can't marry you, I will die unwed."

It was impossible to doubt his sincerity. She was sore, angry, humiliated; angry, that he should have divined her love for him, angry with herself that she had not hidden it.

"I was too honest with you. I should have been more cunning," she said, bitterly.

"Cunning?"

"Yes—cunning to hide my secret."

"Can there be any question of cunning between us?"

"I had hoped not—I had thought not. But it seems that I was mistaken."

"You are not mistaken. There is a horrible fatality—something which has overtaken me suddenly. I can't tell you what it is now. Don't ask me. It would sacrifice your young life."

She looked him squarely in the face.

"Aren't women meant to be creatures of sacrifice? Is it anything new for a woman to be sacrificed to a—to a man?"

"I don't know. I trust it is. At any rate, I will not sacrifice you to my—whims."

She smiled at him.

"I am so sorry. You must think me rather abrupt. We—we were almost tragic, weren't we?" she said, wistfully. "Do you know, I am inclined to think that I have a genius for sacrifice. Won't you put it to the test? Nothing makes a woman so happy as the knowledge that she is sacrificing herself. She is only unhappy when she isn't allowed to do it."

"You don't ask me what it is that has come between us?"

"No," she said, simply, "no; I don't ask. If you felt you could have done so, I am sure that you would have told me. The main point is that I am a woman, and that there should be no other woman. I can forgive anything else."

"There is nothing to forgive. It is the hand of fate."

She looked at him, searchingly.

"I don't ask you to tell me. I am going to find out for myself. I sus-

pect Algy has had a hand in it. Don't trouble to deny it. Now, I am going to be unwomanly, and tell you that I love you, that I will never give you up, that your love is the one thing I have wanted ever since I can remember. Hush-h! Don't speak! You are looking frightfully ill and worried; but my heart tells me that you are true to me. Nothing else matters."

"Nothing?"

"No, nothing." She smiled, bravely. "Now, come to luncheon. We must take care of 'Soldier, soldier, home from the wars.'"

She picked up the jewel-case from the floor. "Don't think me ungrateful. I did not mean to despise your gift. Your lips are quite blue—you must be half starved."

He took her hands, and drew her to him. She met his kiss frankly. At the touch of her young lips, he groaned, for her love meant so much to him.

She looked at him triumphantly. "You would never have dared to kiss me had you cared for any one else."

"It is something new to me to think that you can be jealous."

"It is something new to myself—I didn't know it was there—but I am the most jealous woman alive. Now, come to luncheon. Let us be happy. You are only keeping this back from me because you don't want to make me unhappy. Here is your necklace."

He opened the case, and put the flashing jewels round her fair throat. "I brought them from South Africa—virgin stones—for you. How glad they must be, after centuries in the caverns of the earth, to draw fresh life from you!"

She lifted the glittering gems, pressed them softly to her lips, then took them off and put them back in the case. "I should not have liked a gift from you which had ever been worn by another woman," she said, happily. "It would not have seemed the same."

"And I should not like to think that these stones had been desecrated by the touch of another woman's hand," he said, with sudden fire.

"Come, we will go to luncheon. Only,

mind that I am going to find a way out of our difficulties. I am jealous of everything which keeps you from me. Come."

He followed her, torn by conflicting emotions.

VI

THE PROFESSOR PROPOSES

"My dear!" Mrs. Marjoribanks entered Veronica's boudoir the next afternoon, with ill-concealed agitation. "Professor Cheyne has come. For some time past there have been—well, indications of his coming. He asked for—you!"

"Did he?" Veronica's tone was languid. "That was rather rude of him. Do you mind going down to entertain him, auntie? I don't feel equal to his exhaustive, and exhausting, theories to-day. Besides, he evidently wants to see you, although you always quarrel. He seems to look upon you as a tonic. Do you mind?"

"Of course I don't mind. But what, quarreling apart, do you think he has really come for?"

"Afternoon tea," said Veronica, with a spice of mischief in her tones. "That's all. At his age, tea and topics comprise the universe."

"I think not, my dear. I do think you ought to look after me better." Mrs. Marjoribanks rippled over with laughter. "I really believe that he has come to ask my hand of you. What Jane Austen calls 'permission to pay his addresses' would seem to be his penultimate object. I am the ultimate one."

"Dinner is most men's ultimate object. Woman is merely a preliminary leading to the proper preparation of dinner. But why should he ask me? What have I to do with it?"

"Everything. You are my most influential and important surviving relative and have the—the wisdom of youth. According to the school in which the professor has been brought up, he would naturally, irrespective of age, look upon you as the head of the

family. The professor is punctilious in these little matters. It is his attention to detail which has made him such a brilliant success as a professor. His attentions to me have not been quite so brilliant; but, then, I suppose I am too full of details for him to grasp all at once."

"Oh! Suppose you act for me, auntie, and settle it between yourselves. I don't wish to be the stern guardian. Then you can do exactly as you like without going through the idle form of consulting me." She sighed.

Mrs. Marjoribanks looked at herself in a large mirror.

"It is fortunate that I am exceptionally well dressed to-day. Something seemed to whisper that this would be an eventful day for me, and I told Elise to do her best. That is why I can hardly breathe. Like the situation, I am rather strained. With this dress, and in a subdued light, I might be taken for thirty—by an inexperienced man of the professor's age. I wonder if I can manage to sit near the pink lamp-shade."

"Do you think that, if he has made up his mind to propose to you he will allow himself to be influenced by such trifles as pink lamp-shades?"

"My dear girl, you can never tell what influences a man. Sometimes he prefers to be influenced by something shady. It reminds him of his own past."

"It is generally the woman who doesn't know what she wants," murmured Veronica. "Aren't you keeping him waiting a long time? He may grow restive if you already begin to ride him on the curb."

"They also serve who only stand and wait," retorted Mrs. Marjoribanks, using her powder-puff with considerable skill. "I mustn't look too 'slim,' as the Boers say; it might make him apprehensive with regard to the future."

"From what I know of the professor, he will probably be sitting down or striding about and calling you names."

"H'm, yes, probably. Fancy my

'bagging' him so soon! Most people consider him as inaccessible as a mountain goat. That's the effect of wearing a beard."

"Aren't you rather 'proticipating'?"

"Yes; that's where the fun comes in. After all, the professor may be waiting merely to lecture. He said the other day how much he disapproved of me—I was so unsound on logarithms. If it be true that disapproval begets love, so many people have disapproved of me that I ought to be the best-loved woman in the world. I want to keep the professor waiting. Waiting will make him nervous; then, he won't be so cocksure about my accepting him. A man always idealizes the thing for which he has to wait—until he gets it. Then he idealizes himself, and tries to make his ideal live down to him."

"Are you going to accept him? Why not get a post as keeper of the museum mummies instead of adopting this particular one?"

"Ah, now you're spiteful. He's only about fifty, and far more thoroughly preserved than the most juvenile mummy. Besides, the professor is much better than nothing at all. Some one has to wear those fetish boots which I have been keeping for so long, and a mummy wouldn't be equal to them. I'm tired of seeing them—the boots, not the mummies—in my room. I used to make a tremendous fuss when they were muddy; but I'm so sick of being a widow that I would even allow a man to smoke in my drawing-room rather than not have a husband to fuss over. We may hate to admit it, my dear, but a woman with a well-regulated mind is never happy unless she has a husband to make miserable."

"You're much too humble to-day, auntie. Besides, he is such a scarecrow. You'd have to enamel, or whitewash him, or something."

"There isn't enough of him to cut down—he only wants trimming, my dear, only wants trimming. A shillingsworth of haircutting at Truefitt's will make him quite presentable. Once I get my shorn lamb, I'll temper

my temper to him as long as he behaves himself. Of course, I must play my fish carefully."

"Very well. I—I don't think I'd care to play with the professor. I have an idea that mountain goats can butt, if aroused. Remember, that if you do accept him, he will be my uncle."

"So he will. I'd forgotten that. Most people are glad of an uncle—if they are poor. You won't spoil sport by coming down, will you? I shall have to be very careful or he will break away."

"Oh, no, of course I am not coming down. I have more sympathy. Hadn't you better take a landing-net with you?"

"It seems to me there is a little too much bait already—a landing-net will only accentuate it. You can't catch a mountain goat in a landing-net." Mrs. Marjoribanks gave rather a rueful look at her ample proportions. "I'll tell Warburton to send your tea up-stairs, if you don't mind. The last time the professor came, he hinted a partiality for tea-cakes. Am I morally justified in luring him on with tea-cakes? He says that in his old house near the British Museum, he never sees a tea-cake. The early Britons never took tea, and most of the museum officials model themselves on the early Britons, except that they don't paint. They look blue, instead."

"Ah, well, if the museum officials don't paint, there are a good many women who do. Aren't you a little too giddy over so serious a thing?"

"Do you mean tea-cakes or professors? They're both a little difficult to swallow without buttering. The first time a man came to propose to me," declared Mrs. Marjoribanks, with reminiscent enjoyment, "I opened my Bible haphazard for an appropriate text, and found something about smiting a man under the fifth rib. No wonder there aren't enough husbands to go round when people waste them like that. And the Biblical authorities have always seemed so very emphatic about the fifth rib; all the others appear to have been too vulgar to mention.

Now, if I go down in a natural, light-hearted way, the professor will think I'm accustomed to proposals, and then he won't be so nervous."

"He! He's about as nervous as the sphinx. You are the only person I have ever seen thoroughly upset him. As you are strong, be merciful."

Mrs. Marjoribanks was half-way to the door. "I expect he's feeling very bad by this time. That's the right mood to get him into. When a man says he isn't good enough for a woman, he's always telling the truth, though he doesn't want the woman to think so. Wish good luck to my fishing!"

"Good luck to your fishing," mechanically repeated Veronica, and Mrs. Marjoribanks went gaily away.

She halted a moment outside the drawing-room door, which was slightly ajar. To her amazement, she heard the professor declaiming with furious emphasis:

"Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! Fear no heavier chastisement from
me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at——"

"Is the woman never coming?" he broke off, in a rage. "If I have to wait much longer, I shall either smash the furniture or recite the curse from 'The Cenci.' I don't like these extreme measures, but my reason will flee if I don't do something. Disgraceful! Perfectly disgraceful to keep a professor waiting as if he were a poodle."

She coughed. "Ahem, professor. Here I am at last. Are you thinking of going on the stage? We need a *jeune premier* badly. All our leading young men on the English stage are fifty, and all the leading ladies grandmothers."

The professor, although confused by this unprovoked attack, wheeled round and glared at her, watch in hand. "You said precisely four o'clock, and it's a quarter past," he growled. "What have I to do with the English stage? I was only occupying my mind."

"Well, isn't that sometimes in a vacant stage? You ought to have realized that every hunted thing is allowed a quarter of an hour's grace—particularly when it is ordering tea-cakes for the hunter." She smiled sweetly as she gave him her hand. "Put away your watch, professor, and tell me why you were calling me 'a noteless blot.'"

"I was just reciting whimsy-whamsy stuff to pass the time," he said, fiercely. "I've sacrificed the Royal Society for you, and you keep me pacing up and down like—"

"A bear in a cage—a grizzly bear." She looked at his long locks as she motioned him to sit down. "What do you mean by sacrificing royal society? Were you to take afternoon tea with his Majesty?"

"Such ignorance is incredible! Incredible!" The professor turned almost purple in the dying daylight. "I was going to the Royal Society to read my paper on 'The Subjection of Woman in the Days of the Primitive Club.'"

"What a pity you didn't bring your clubs with you! People would have thought that you had become human and taken to golf. Now, kindly ring the bell for some tea. No, it's no use to press the top of it. It isn't an electric bell."

He shambled back to his chair. "To think of a great city like London not having electric bells everywhere!"

"Oh, you'll find enough electricity in most London belles. Tea, Warburton. And have some sent up to your mistress."

"It's disgracing one's manhood to be waited on by a striped-legged creature like that," growled the professor, "when he might be growing corn in Canada."

"We can't all grow corn—that would be too selfish. Some of us must take our share in the labor of eating it," said Mrs. Marjoribanks, settling herself just the most effective distance from the lamp. "Try the tea-cakes, professor. You'll be sorry for it afterward, but you'll enjoy the present moment."

"Who's a hunted thing?" he said, standing before the fireplace, and looking down on her, tea-cup in one hand, tea-cake in the other, and reverting to her original remark.

"I am."

"Who is hunting you?"

"A little more cream? Sugar? One lump? Yes, I thought so. Who is hunting me? You are."

"I'm not a hunting man," but he smiled. "And you're not a fox."

"What am I, then? There's generally at least one brush between us when we meet. It is really about time you paid me a genuine compliment, professor. Most of your compliments are such left-handed ones, they take my breath away. Now, tell me," she smiled radiantly up at him, "what am I? Be careful in your definition, or we shall quarrel again; and there is nothing so indecent as for a man to be hopelessly in the right when he quarrels with a woman. What am I? Swallow your tea-cake, and tell me."

"You're just a whimsy-whamsy woman, like all the others."

"That is untrue. Untrue! Fie on you! Fie on you!"

"How is it untrue?"

"I'll prove it to you. Tell me how many other women you have been to call on in the last six months. On your honor, not as a man, but as a professor."

"None. Do you think, with my lectures, I've the time to waste—?"

She smiled again.

"Well, you need not get cross. Doesn't that prove that I am not like the others, or you wouldn't have come here?"

"Do you think that's logic? Logic! Woman, woman, don't meddle with the higher things sacred to man."

"I don't think anything about it; and I've never yet found anything sacred to man—except his digestion. I can't help human nature being illogical. You scientists want method in everything, even in a—wife."

The professor jumped. "What has a wife"—he rolled the word round his

tongue with relish—"what has a wife to do with logic? How do you make that out? How—?"

"Take care! Take care! You'll upset your cup. Tell me why you are so nervous this afternoon. One would think you were dying to unburden yourself of a guilty secret."

"Your inconsequent way of flying from one thing to another is enough to make anybody jump. You haven't any premises."

"No, that's true enough, professor. They belong to Miss Wylde."

"What do?"

"These premises."

He paused grimly, tea-cake in hand. "Never mind these premises. I'll not stop to explain to a feather-brained creature like yourself. What do you think of Museum street?"

"I don't think of it. Why should I?"

"I want you to think of it."

"Why? why? why? Can't you remember that this isn't a thinking age!"

"Could you live in Museum street without half-a-dozen striped-legged things to wait on you?"

She leaned mirthfully forward.

"Really, professor, you are so painfully abrupt. Kindly let me see the size of your foot?"

"Do you think I want to kick you?" he burst out. "You are more than giving me the size of your tongue."

"N-no; but I have a pair of boots up-stairs, and I wanted to know whether they would fit you. They are fetish boots which have been in my room for years."

"His?" He glowered at her, fiercely. "Marjoribanks's? Don't tell me they're his!"

"Of course, they are. Do you think I would be so indelicate as to allow of any one else's being there? Professor, you know very little about women—very little indeed."

"But surely he's dead and gone to heaven?"

"He is dead—I have no information about the second part of your question. Let us hope for the best.

You professors are so inconsequent. Yes, that's the word—inconsequent!"

"You mean?"

"I mean that, if ever man qualified for heavenly joys, he must have done so on earth."

"And you are anxious to qualify in the same way so that you can share his ultimate bliss?"

"I didn't say that. No, I didn't say just that."

The professor's cautious habits once more reasserted themselves.

"Then what do you mean by singling me out for your—your scientific attentions?" Her pretty foot began to tap impatiently. She became serious; her flippancy dropped from her. "Men and women came into the world long before science."

"And they'll go out of it long before science, also. I'll tell you in a moment," he said, methodically taking a reel of cotton, a thimble and a cloth-covered button from his waistcoat pocket.

She gazed at him in amazement.

"What are these for? Thimble-rigging?"

He took off his coat. "You'll excuse my disrobing myself, but I'd like to try your skill as a housewife. You button's off."

"Oh, very well. Just ring the bell, please."

Warburton came in.

"Take this coat to the housekeeper's room," she said, "and tell Mrs. Jenkins to sew on that button. Then bring it back again."

The professor, in his shirt-sleeves, cut a somewhat undignified figure. His cuffs were so frayed!

"What do you mean by that?" he asked, quietly, when Warburton, who never permitted himself to be surprised at anything, had disappeared with the somewhat rusty coat.

"What do I mean? Oh, wait, wait, wait!"

Her little foot tapped more quickly than before.

After a somewhat trying interval of a few minutes, Warburton returned with the coat, and respectfully assisted

the professor into it. Then he withdrew, still without looking surprised. Nothing less than a rattlesnake bite could have disturbed his gravity.

"Would you mind ringing again?" Mrs. Marjoribanks asked.

The professor rang. His mind was beginning to reel. He seemed to have been ringing the bell for the last half-hour.

"Bring the professor's hat," commanded Mrs. Marjoribanks.

The blandly attentive Warburton brought it. Had she commanded him to fetch the body of the late Mr. Marjoribanks himself, he would have taken an omnibus to Kensal Green Cemetery, opened the family vault, and have brought it back without comment.

"Good-bye, professor," she said, when Warburton had once more retired.

"G-good-bye! What do you mean?"

"What do I mean?" She rose in indignant majesty. "I honored you. I thought you were a rough diamond. You are only a bear. You come to me as if I were for sale. You propose to buy me to—to sew on buttons! I will not be bought!"

"But I l-love you," he stammered.

"You do not! You love only yourself! You haven't said one tender word to me. All you have thought of is yourself. I—I—" Sobs choked her. She buried her face in her hands.

The professor was genuinely distressed. His hat fell on the floor; he put a timid hand upon her shoulder. "Dear woman, I beg your pardon. It was only a mask. You've sunshine enough in you to fill the whole of Museum street. I—I've been so worked up, I—I didn't know how to do it. I—I thought the button would lead up to it; that you would pity me. And you can't picture," he said, with deep feeling, "what it is to go to bed a buttonless man, to wake up a buttonless man, to know that others know you're a buttonless man. I thought we'd get on from buttons to the other thing in a few minutes—but you're a whirlwind, woman, a whirlwind!"

"I—I've never heard of a C-c-cupid in b-b-buttons."

He knelt down beside her.

"You're a beautiful whirlwind for all that, my dear," he whispered. "I'm not so old but I can see it. And I can't get on with my lectures for thinking of you. You come with your abominable jokes and quips and cranks, and I'm just silly about you. Silly! Me! Silly! I never thought to make such a concession to sentiment; but you're too much for me. Your fingers are far too pretty to roughen with sewing on my buttons."

Her sobs lessened, her foot ceased to tap the floor.

"Get on," she said; "get on, get on, get on."

"Get on with what, my dear?"

"Get on with what you are going to say. Quick! quick! quick! I—I didn't know you had such a musical voice, professor. It—it sounded quite nice when you called me 'my dear.'"

The professor, although altogether unaccustomed to the wiles of women, had the wit to put his arms round her and kiss her.

"I don't understand you," he said, fervently. "I doubt whether you understand yourself. But there's nothing else worth understanding if you won't explain it to me. Now I come to look into them, your eyes are cornflower blue."

She was amazed.

"You—you never found that out before?"

"You are such an unreasonable woman," said the professor, "and your logic is like that of a two-year-old babe—cry till you get what you want. Your eyes grow quite dark when you're angry. Your lips are very sweet."

"And you l-love me? Say it, say it, say it! Don't boggle, professor, but say it."

"I love you—to my sorrow," the professor admitted. "It is altogether unaccountable that an intellectual man like myself should spoil his lectures by falling in love; but if there are harsh, though cogent, reflections in my paper on 'The Subjection of Woman

in the Days of the Primitive Club,' I'll cut them all out for your sake, and cut my club, too, if you'll only marry me."

"That is very noble of you. And you will let me do just as I please?"

"As far as I think judicious," said the professor, firmly. He rang the bell again. "It's for the striped-legged creature—the thing that ought to grow corn instead of eating it."

"What do you want with him?"

"Perhaps you'll just be good enough to tell him to send your woman to fetch those boots of which you spoke."

She looked at him with admiration, and did as she was told.

Warburton, distinctly pained, went away, received the boots from Mrs. Marjoribanks's maid, and brought them gingerly into the room.

"I'll trouble you for yesterday's paper," said the professor.

Warburton brought it to him.

"I'll wrap them in this," said the professor; and the late Mr. Marjoribanks's boots disappeared from view.

"What are you going to do with them?" tremulously asked Mrs. Marjoribanks, for there was something in the professor's eye which awed her.

"They are good boots," said the professor, critically; "very good boots; but I don't think I am the man to wear them. There's a crossing-sweeper at the corner of Museum street who will be glad of a pair."

"But they'll never wear out," said the horrified Mrs. Marjoribanks. "You've no idea how strong they are."

"I'm thinking, if they're always round the corner where we can hear them clumping about, they'll check all references to the departed, and comparisons to the disadvantage of the living," said the professor, drily. "I've heard your late husband was a very accomplished man, and I'm not going to suffer from his surpassing excellencies. When the crossing-sweeper is wearing these boots, they will remind us that your late husband is investigating phenomena unknown to living mortals, and must not be disturbed by

any flippant allusions to his earthly moments."

She came to him on the hearth-rug, and the boots slipped to the floor. "I thought I was going to be master," she urged, with a dash of mischief in her eyes, "and you are already dictating to me in the most masterful manner. You've no idea how intensely satisfactory it is to give you the right to bully me."

"We'll just go on as we've begun," said the professor, picking up the boots. "A contentious woman is—indeed, when I look into your eyes, I don't rightly remember what a contentious woman is like. Woman, you've stolen two little bits of heaven's blue, and put them in your face for eyes."

She stopped her mouth with her slim fingers. "Did ever bear dance so prettily! Dance, professor, dance!"

The professor sat down, boots and all.

"If you'll do that again," he said, with inexpressible content, "I'm thinking the Royal Society can just wait for me till they're all blue in the face."

"What a masterful man you are!" she declared, throwing the manuscript of his lecture into a distant arm-chair.

"I am," said the professor, honestly believing that he was stating the truth.

VII

THE BITER BIT

As time went on, Crewe began to grow nervous, for he had tried several little surprises with the major, and, each time, had suffered more than had the object of them. He found that the mental strain of plotting and planning to give an air of naturalness to his designs affected his own health prejudicially. Besides, Wayne was always at his elbow with an embarrassing desire to be useful.

If the valet suspected anything, he kept his suspicions to himself, although, on more than one occasion, Crewe, bent upon nocturnal expeditions—one of these took the shape of a clock with

an alarm penetrating enough to waken the dead—found Wayne loitering about near the major's door in the dead of night. On being asked what he was doing there, Wayne pleaded toothache, and pointed to a huge bandage round his jaw. When Crewe did at length get the alarm safely into Graham's room, Wayne damaged the spring so that it would not work. It must have been Wayne, for no one else knew anything about it. On another occasion, Crewe had put materials into the major's fireplace to choke him out of sleep, and make him think that the house was on fire. Wayne, after a casual glance at the fireplace, took away the smoldering mass of wood shavings and chemicals in a pail of water long before they were timed to half stifle the major with their sulphurous fumes. Wayne was ubiquitous, for he always appeared on the scene just in time to frustrate Crewe's most ambitious and carefully planned attempts to hurry Graham out of existence.

But, one morning, Crewe and the major went out for a stroll, and when they reached the little island in the middle of the road just at the Criterion end of Piccadilly, it seemed to Crewe that his opportunity had come at last. He suddenly pushed heavily against the major as if he were about to faint. The major, who was a man of resource, saved himself from falling under the wheels of an approaching omnibus by rolling rapidly into the gutter, from the gutter to the pavement, and from the pavement into the arms of a policeman, who picked him up and recommended him to go home and have a bath, as the sticky slime of Piccadilly never relaxed its hold. "You gents did ought to be more careful, sir," he said. "There's your friend hanging over the post as if he's going to faint." And he dashed under the nose of a cab-horse just in time to pull Crewe back into safety on the island which divided the traffic and made a haven for timorous dames intent on shopping.

The major stayed his wrath with an

effort, and helped the policeman drag the half-lifeless Crewe into a chemist's shop. In spite of their united efforts, it took some time to bring Crewe round. When he did open his eyes, he shivered.

"Is he—dead?" he asked, sitting up and looking wildly about him. "Is he dead, policeman?"

"Dead! Not much, sir!" said the policeman, who was still hovering round. "But it was a narrow shave for both you gents. If you wants to go in for larks like that, choose a quieter place than Piccadilly Circus, gentlemen. Thank 'ee, sir." His expression changed as the major slipped half a sovereign into his hand, and, a king of blue, he once more resumed his lordly sway over the traffic.

The major put Crewe in a cab, and told the driver to take him home. Curiously enough, Crewe made no objection to going home. He dreaded to meet the major's eye as he slouched into the cab.

The major hurried on to his tailor's, pondering deeply. The incident would have annoyed him a great deal more had he not remembered that there was another suit waiting for him there. With the aid of an assistant, he speedily disencumbered himself of his stained clothes, and put on the new ones. Then, he sent out for a fresh hat, donned his new overcoat, and went off to meet Veronica as if nothing had happened. They were to lunch at the Carlton, and then "do" picture galleries.

He found Veronica on the threshold of the Carlton. There was a little frown upon her brow—she was not accustomed to wait for any one. But the major looked so happy when he caught sight of her that she forgave him on the spot.

"What made you so late? I thought all military men were punctual." She smiled, and the frown disappeared.

"Army men are never late," said the major. "Do you think I'd be a minute late if I could help it?"

"No," said Veronica, softly. "I only wanted to be tyrannical. But

you were so good-tempered about it that I can't even pretend to be cross. What really kept you? Couldn't you get rid of Algy?"

"Oh, yes, I've got rid of him easily enough," the major declared, grimly. "It was a question who should get rid of the other, but I won, hands down, this time. I'll tell you all about it presently. I had to get my boots cleaned and buy some fresh gloves and a new hat."

It was not, however, until after luncheon, when the major had taken her away to the classic solitude of the National Gallery for the ostensible purpose of looking at old masters, that he drew Veronica into a corner and told her what had happened. "I don't know what's the matter with Crewe," he concluded. "He's always, either by accident or by design, trying to scare me, and frightening himself much the worse of the two. He's got all my symptoms, only worse," he incautiously added. "He'll go off, too, if he isn't careful."

Veronica started. Here, then, was the clue to the mystery.

"All the Crewes have weak hearts; nothing else ever ails them. Isn't your heart sound?" she asked, carelessly, and affected to be absorbed in the somewhat rubicund nose of an old master.

"Ah! she doesn't suspect or she wouldn't be so indifferent about it," thought the major. "We'll be happy for a few hours, at any rate."

Veronica repeated her question.

"I don't think Crewe's is," the major admitted. "Let us go and look at Tucker's 'Wind, Steam and Rain,' or whatever they call it. From what I remember of it, it's the crockiest old engine going."

But Veronica was not interested in "crocky" old engines just then. One of those inspirations that come so often to women and so rarely to men, had flashed upon her.

"This reason which is parting us, has something to do with yourself—your health?" she suddenly asked the major, who, caught unaware, had no time to parry the thrust.

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"Yes, yes," he said, hurriedly; "only, I don't want to talk about it. Let us be happy to-day. Won't you believe it is better that I shouldn't?"

"Oh, very well," she said, carelessly, as if the subject were not worth discussion. "The Cavershams have gone to live in Harley street. Edith says it isn't cheerful. I wonder whether they are anywhere near your friend, Harcourt. By the way, what is his number?"

He told her the number quite unsuspiciously, and, half an hour later, pleading a headache, Veronica said she would go home.

"Of course I'll see you back," he suggested, hailing a hansom.

"Not this afternoon, if you don't mind," she said, seeing the look of disappointment on his face. "Remember, you're going to the theatre with Algy to-night. Go back and get a rest. You've earned a rest after all that hard work in South Africa. Come to see me to-morrow."

She looked bewitchingly lovely, as she smiled at him from the depths of the hansom.

When the cab was half-way home, Veronica suddenly stopped it, and told the man to drive her to Harley street.

"Yes," the pretty maid said, in answer to her uncompromising ring, "Dr. Harcourt is in. Have you an appointment?"

No, Veronica had not an appointment, but, if Dr. Harcourt could spare her a few minutes, she wanted to see him. Then, as an afterthought, she handed the pretty maid a spare card of the major's, which she had carefully taken out of some flowers he had sent her.

The effect was magical, for Dr. Harcourt, without waiting to be formal, himself appeared in the waiting-room. He looked anxious and worried.

"So glad to meet you, Miss Wylde. Perhaps you can give me news of Graham. Only yesterday, I heard of his return from the earl. They were all wondering why he doesn't go down to Eske again, instead of spending most of his time in town. Anything wrong

with him? He might have dropped in to see me. We're old school and college chums, you know."

"But he has been to see you. He told me so only last week," said Veronica. "You were out of town on that day."

"Out of town!" The doctor started. "Miss Wylde, you don't mean to say that he looked me up on that particular day?"

"Of course I do. Why shouldn't he? I remember his telling me how disappointed he was not to find you at home."

"What on earth possessed him to come on that day, when he might have chosen any other! Does he—does he seem to have anything on his mind? Is he worried at all?" asked Harcourt, abruptly.

"Why, doctor, you must be a magician! That is just what I came to see you about. He won't tell me what is the matter with him, and the consequences may be very serious to both of us."

The doctor strode irresolutely up and down the room.

"Miss Wylde, I am sure I can trust you. I've got into a horrible hole, too. Had I remained away another day, my practice would have been ruined."

"Why? What do you mean?"

"Powerscourt promised to look after my patients for me. His note, in reply to mine asking him to take charge of my work, was coherent enough. In spite of his manner not giving him away, he'd gone off his head from overwork, and no one found it out till he'd got back home from seeing my patients. He wasn't even sane enough to make coherent notes about them."

"But why should that ruin you?"

"He has neglected everything for hypnotism, and that finished him. Two of my patients have been suffering from certain things which he suggested to them. In both cases, the suggestion was utterly baseless. The only way was to explain to poor Powerscourt in one of his lucid intervals what he had done, and to get him to

undo the mischief. Two women fancied they had heart-disease—"

"Heart-disease! That explains it all!" Veronica gave a little cry of delight. "Now, I know why Geo—the major, is so strange in his manner."

"I don't wonder he's strange in his manner, if he fancies he's got heart disease. I'd a letter from him a few days before he sailed for home, saying how absolutely well he felt—wound healing up, not an ache or strain or anything, and that it was rather a fraud for him to get leave when there still remained so much to be done. I expect he dropped in to see me, and poor, crazy Powerscourt thought he was a patient." Harcourt held up his professionally white hands in despair. "What have I done, after all these years of hard work, to be overwhelmed like this! Fortunately, I have put everything else right. Graham's a brave man, but it will scare him out of his wits if he thinks I've heard he's ill and am worrying about him. Of course, he doesn't know anything about Powerscourt going mad. Was there ever such a tragedy of errors?"

Veronica gazed at him helplessly. Here was a fresh complication. "What are we to do? How are we to help the major?"

Harcourt stopped to consider. "We can't help him. Powerscourt is the only man to do that. If Graham fancies he has heart-disease, and gets one violent shock after another, there's no reason why, in time, he shouldn't really have heart-disease."

Veronica turned white.

"Suppose the major told any one of this, and the person he told wants to get him out of the way. If this person could contrive a series of apparently accidental shocks—little unpremeditated things—things which would not bring him under suspicion—would not a man cold-blooded enough, and wicked enough, gradually accomplish his aim?"

"Of course he would. He would only have to keep on devising shock after shock. In time, he would worry his man to death."

Veronica hastily explained what Crewe had done only that very morning. "But," she added, "it apparently had more effect on him than on the major. My cousin's people all have weak hearts."

Harcourt smiled, grimly.

"If your cousin isn't careful, he'll get himself into difficulties. You see, if he has heart-disease and doesn't know it, he must bear all the strain of it and the additional strain of his murderous designs upon Graham. Get Graham away from him without delay. If you will ask him to call here at three to-morrow afternoon, I'll have Powerscourt undo his work. He's very cranky and unreliable, and I shall have to coax him a bit."

Veronica thanked Harcourt, warmly. Now she knew the horrible shadow which clouded Graham's life, she felt sure of her ability to remove it. Why had he not told her about it before? And how much he must have suffered in silence at Crewe's unscrupulous hands! When she thought of Crewe, she shuddered. Was there ever so cold-blooded and unprincipled a murderer in the world? He deserved hanging as high as Haman. Even at that very moment, exasperated by his repeated failures, he might be plotting some fresh scheme against Graham's life.

As she dressed for dinner, she wondered whether she ought not to send Graham a telegram asking him to come to her. Then, she remembered that the two men were going to a theatre and that nothing much could happen there. No, she must not say anything until to-morrow.

Hastily scribbling a note to Graham reminding him to lunch with her and Mrs. Marjoribanks on the morrow, Veronica went to dinner. To-morrow seemed such a long way off!

VIII

WAYNE AVENGES HIMSELF

CREWE came softly into his bedroom, and, hurriedly turning up the

light, placed a little box on the dressing-table. He moved about for a minute or two, then paused before the glass. "The strain's getting too much for me—the major's tougher than I thought," he murmured. "By Jove, I am blue about the gills. Where's that fool, Wayne? I'll make sure he isn't about. Wayne, where are you?"

Wayne did not answer, although the door of the major's room happened to be ajar, and he heard perfectly. Muttering an oath, Crewe, who seemed to be very much shaken, went downstairs into his sitting-room to get a brandy-and-soda. Somehow, he had taken a good many brandy-and-sodas lately.

"Now's my chance," thought Wayne. "Wonder what he's got in the box? It seems to be some new dodge to upset the major."

He heard the soda-water hiss into the tumbler, and hurriedly slipped upstairs. "Here I am, sir, here I am," he called out. In a second, he opened the box, and saw that it contained three big percussion-caps. He slipped the caps into his waistcoat pocket, then hurriedly took them out again, and placed them in a line close together on the waxed floor, just by the leg of the dressing-table. When Crewe entered the room, Wayne was busily laying out his evening clothes, and putting the studs into a shirt.

Crewe snatched up the box from the dressing-table, and hastily slipped it into his overcoat pocket. His hand shook as he did so.

"Hang that coat up, you good-for-nothing scoundrel," he said to Wayne. "You're always loafing about somewhere else when you're wanted. Help me off with my things. Now shave me, and be quick about it!"

Wayne went out, came back with hot water, and shaved him without a word.

"What are you stopping for?" suddenly asked Crewe. "Been drinking? You've a face like a nightmare. Turn the gas up." He laughed almost hysterically at the reflection of Wayne's pasty face in the glass. "You're no

beauty, Wayne. If I'd a face like that, I'd drown myself. Look sharp."

"Yes, sir. Can't 'elp my face, sir. Mother gave it me." Wayne edged Crewe's chair a little nearer to the dressing-table. "There's such 'orrible noises at night, sir. I can't stand them, can you? I wake up in a fright, and— and see things—hear people walking about, sir. But the noises is the worst."

"Noises! What noises? Pooh, you're dreaming! What d'you mean?"

"All sorts of noises, sir. Things happening unexpected-like." Wayne carefully wiped the razor, and put it in its case. "If you'd kindly pay me the two years' wages due to me, sir, and let me go, I'd take it as a favor. Beggin' your pardon, sir, it's time we parted—parted to-night."

"Are you mad, Wayne? Sure you haven't been at the brandy-bottle down-stairs?"

"Mad, sir? No, sir. Brandy-bottle? No, sir. I'm no more mad than you are, sir. Only, I've made up my mind we're going to part to-night."

"You impertinent scoundrel! What d'you mean?"

"Very sorry, sir. I didn't mean to be rude, sir, but, for God's sake, pay me my wages and let me go! It'll be better for both of us, sir!—better for both of us."

His subdued excitement infected Crewe, who went ghastly blue and white about the face. "Don't worry me any more, you scoundrel," he spluttered. "Don't you see I'm not fit to be worried?"

"Ah, then, you haven't slept neither, sir, lately?" asked Wayne, eagerly.

"Slept? Of course I haven't slept! I'm ill—dreadfully ill. I don't know why, but I feel nearly dead. Having an aggravating brute like you about, always whining for money he hasn't earned, doesn't make me any better. You'll repent it some day, Wayne, when I come into the major's money and kick you out, and you've only the workhouse to go to."

Wayne paused, powder-puff in hand. "Yes, sir, dessay I shall, sir.

I suppose you've never done anything you're sorry for now, sir?"

"I? Of course not! What put that into your thick head? Give me my watch."

"Oh, I—I didn't know, sir. I—I only thought people do go off sudden sometimes, when they least expect it, and it's well to be prepared."

"What are you driving at?" Crewe looked into the glass, and Wayne's face seemed to suggest a new idea to him. "I say, Wayne, if you'll do something for me, I'll pay you your wages in a fortnight."

"Yes, sir. I'd do a good deal to get my wages in a fortnight. I've a starving old mo——"

"Hang your mother! Now, listen to me."

"Yes, sir."

"You know how ill the major is?"

"Yes, sir."

"The doctors say he has heart-disease. His life is no good to him. He may go off at any moment."

"Yes, sir."

"Any sudden shock might be fatal to him."

"Yes, sir."

"You can see for yourself how the poor fellow suffers."

"Yes, sir."

"He can't really enjoy life. Don't you think it would be a kindness to put him out of his misery?"

"H-how, sir?"

"How? Oh, there are dozens of ways. Now, my tie—that's it. If anything happened to the major, I should come in for most of his money."

"Yes, sir."

"D'you know how much money I have at the present moment?"

"No, sir."

"Ah, well, just turn out my trousers pocket. How much?"

"Seven and six, sir."

"Looks bad for your wages, Wayne, doesn't it? Two years' arrears come to more than that."

"Yes, sir."

"Yes. Now polish my nails—that left little finger nail isn't all it should be. You ought to be more careful

how you turn me out. What were we talking about?"

"Wages, sir."

"Oh, yes, so we were. The major's sure to be a bit unstrung with the excitement when we come back from the theatre to-night, Wayne."

"Yes, sir."

"And if, by any chance, you could give him a sudden shock—something totally unexpected—a really good one—it might be fatal to him."

"Yes, sir."

"Well?"

"Well, sir?"

"What are you waiting for?"

"You, sir."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Put it into writing. Make me an offer, sir."

Crewe half-wheeled round. "D'you think I'm such a fool as to put my neck in your power, Wayne?"

"No, sir."

"Then don't you see what an absurd thing you are asking me to do?"

"No, sir. If I might be so bold, sir, just write on a slip of paper you owe me five hundred pounds."

"Owe you five hundred pounds! What for?"

"For money lent and wages, sir."

"Don't you trust me, Wayne? Can't you leave the amount to my honor?"

Even at such a moment Crewe could not play fair.

If Wayne had any lingering compunction in his mind, Crewe's inconceivable meanness about the blood money for doing away with the major confirmed him in the execution of his desperate project. He went downstairs, swallowed a mouthful of brandy neat, and came back with a half-sheet of note-paper and pen and ink.

"If you wouldn't mind just writing it down, sir; it's more satisfactory, sir."

"Oh, very well. What do you want me to say?"

"This is to certify that I owe my faithful servant, Samuel Wayne, for wages and money lent by him to me—" Wayne paused.

"Go on," said Crewe, writing labo-

riously; "—for wages and money lent by him to me."

"For wages and money lent by him to me, the sum of five hundred pounds."

"No, I'm hanged if I do! Five hundred pounds! You'll only drink it, Wayne, or get married."

"Five hundred pounds," repeated Wayne, inexorably. "It's not much to you, sir; it's a lot to me. I'm not going to lose my soul for less. It's pretty cheap, as souls go nowadays."

"Oh, very well, you bloodsucker," Crewe grumbled. "You value your soul at a higher rate than I do. Five hun—! Suppose I don't sign this precious paper? What then?"

"What then, sir?"

Crewe looked up, pen in hand.

"Yes, what then? Don't stand there like a parrot! Suppose I refuse to be blackmailed, what then?"

"Then I split, sir, that's all."

"Oh-h! You split! Very well, I'll sign it. You don't suppose any one would believe your story?"

"Miss Veronica would," said Wayne, carefully blotting the paper, and gradually edging nearer the dressing-table.

"Miss Veronica would! So that's your little game? You're a craftier scoundrel than I thought you were."

"Yes, sir. There's more scoundrels than me in the world, sir." Wayne put the paper in his pocket. "What are my instructions, sir?"

"Get that box out of my coat. You'll find three big percussion-caps in it. Put them in your pocket, and burn the box. I told the gunsmith I wanted those caps specially charged to frighten cats. He says they'll make a good noise."

"Yes, sir."

Wayne pretended to put the caps in his pocket.

"Well, all you have to do when we return from the theatre to-night is to stand at the head of the staircase there as the major comes up, and explode the caps. You understand? Tread on them or do it any way you like; only, make sure they explode."

"Yes, sir. I understand, sir."

"And you'll explode the caps? You

promise? Here, swear it on this Bible. I've never found a use for it before. Besides, I don't trust you and your promises."

"I'll explode the caps, sir. I swear it."

Wayne kissed the Bible with unction.

"You're quite clear?" Crewe gasped, the beads of perspiration standing on his forehead. "After all, you're a handy scoundrel, Wayne. I'd better have let you tackle this affair in the beginning."

"Quite made up your mind, sir?"

Wayne asked, with a demoniacal grin on his face. "You're not going to let the major off?"

"Let him off, curse him! What for?"

"If I might be allowed to mention it, sir, he's spent a lot of money on you, one time and another. Couldn't you—couldn't you give him a chance?"

"Don't be impertinent. Just give me your arm, and help me to the bed. I'll lie down for a few minutes. I want to be quiet. I feel horribly ill to-night; but it will pass off directly."

"Noises and excitements don't seem to agree with you, sir," said Wayne, playing with his victim. "D'you ever say a prayer, sir? Anything like 'Our Father which art in 'eaven,' sir?"

"Say a prayer, you fool! What should I pray about? Con—! Oh! Oh-h-h-h! What are you do—do—?"

Wayne seized Crewe by the coat, and flung him upon the bed, then stamped his left foot hard on the caps. They went off with a bang which made Crewe leap to the floor.

"Way—Wayne, I'm dying! You scoundrel! You—you've kill—killed—the wrong—I" He fell back, a limp heap, upon the bed.

Wayne crept to the top of the stairs. Apparently, no one had heard the explosion. Noiselessly opening the window to allow the fumes to escape, he flung the exploded caps far into the night, hurried back to the room, arranged Crewe's body on the bed, turned down the light, and put his hat and coat on a chair, with one theatre ticket beside them. Then, he shut the win-

dow, and went down-stairs just in time to open the door to the major.

"Your master in yet?" asked the major.

"Yes, sir," said Wayne, quietly. "He's not feeling very well to-night, and thought he'd lie down a bit. He doesn't want to be disturbed. If you go on to the theatre, he'll try to join you later. Here's your ticket, sir."

"Oh, thanks." The major was glad to avoid a tête-à-tête dinner with Crewe. "Don't disturb him. I'll dine out when I've dressed."

Wayne valeted the major with more than his usual skill. "You're an uncommonly handy man," said the major. "Just look to me for your wages, in future." He glanced at Wayne's threadbare coat and cracked shoes. "I fancy they're not paid with any startling regularity."

"Thank you, sir, but I'd rather not say, sir."

"That's right. Don't give your master away. Sometimes, I fancy he's a bit rough with you, Wayne. My gloves? Thanks."

"No, sir. No, sir. Only his way. We're the best of friends, sir, best of friends. Lately, we—we understand one another better, sir."

"That's right, that's right. My hat? Now, I'll be off. You needn't sit up for me, Wayne. Let me have your key."

"Key, sir? Yes, sir. You're not angry with me, sir?"

"Angry! Haven't I just said you're a treasure, Wayne?"

"I was afraid—about Mr. Crewe's owing me money, sir."

"Oh, don't you worry yourself. I'll put that right." And the major went out.

Wayne looked thoughtfully after the major, then went back and folded up his clothes. "I've done him and Miss Veronica a good turn. God knows I've been driven to it! But no one else knows. Now, I'll give the alarm. It's about time."

He moistened his dry lips with his tongue, leisurely went up-stairs, then came running down to the kitchen

with well-simulated terror. "Help! help!" he gasped; "help!"

"What's the matter, Mr. Wayne?" asked the cook.

"Ma-master! master!" gasped Wayne. "He—he's ill. Go up to him, cook, while I run for a doctor."

He fetched the nearest doctor, who hastily examined the dead man. "Heart-disease! Anything of the sort in his family?" he asked, sharply, turning to Wayne.

"Yes, sir. Mother's side," said Wayne. His voice quivered artistically. "I've been his servant a good many years, sir."

"Poor fellow! poor fellow! Keep cool, keep cool," said the doctor. "You've done all you could."

"Yes, sir," said Wayne, sorrowfully. "D'you think, sir, he knows now all I've done for him?"

The doctor looked thoughtfully at the dead body. "I shouldn't be surprised; I shouldn't be surprised. His face hasn't even yet lost the terror of death. Death's an awful thing, man—an awful thing."

"Yes, sir," said Wayne. "'In the midst of life we are in death,' sir. That's what makes it so sudden, sir," and he turned aside to conceal his emotion.

IX

THE BURDEN FALLS

It was not until nearly a week after Crewe's death that the projected meeting between Powerscourt and the major took place.

There had been many formalities—an inquest, a hurried funeral. The major, as a matter of course, made a point of attending his unworthy protégé to the grave, although the shock caused by Crewe's sudden taking off had affected him so seriously that he felt almost too weak and ill to move. Deep down in his heart, there had lurked the possibility of reclaiming Crewe, of showing him the criminal folly and ingratitude of his proposed

crime as well as its uselessness. Now, it was too late, and, with a feeling of relief, he turned from the grave-side in company with Wayne, who remained respectfully staring at the coffin until the last moment. Then, a clod of earth fell with a thud on the polished oak casket, and Wayne almost instantly recovered himself.

"Come inside with me," said the major, motioning Wayne to enter the same mourning-coach. "I want to talk to you."

Wayne respectfully objected that such a proceeding was unseemly. Miss Wylde's carriage had followed the hearse, it was empty—he would ride on the box beside the coachman.

Graham made him get in.

"I want to know if you'll transfer yourself to me," he said, kindly. "You're looking a bit pale and overworked, Wayne."

Wayne, quietly holding his hat on his knee, touched his tow-colored hair with his forefinger, respectfully. "If you don't mind, sir, thank you very much, but I've thought it over, and I'd like to emigrate, sir, with—with mother. Mother's looking forward to foreign travel, sir."

"Emigrate!" The major was disappointed. Then his face grew kinder. "I understand, Wayne. You've had a pretty trying time, and you want a change. That's it, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, if you please, sir. Mother wants to see the world, though she's nearly sixty. I couldn't stand London any longer, sir, after—after what has happened. I—I wouldn't feel easy in my mind."

"Well, I'm sorry—very sorry. How much did your master owe you?"

Wayne produced his scrap of paper. "Five hundred, sir. All my savings and scrapings together."

"We'll call it a thousand. Then you and your mother will be more comfortable. You'd rather have the money than an annuity?"

"If you please, sir. It will give us a start, sir. I'd like to let mother travel in style, sir."

Wayne remained silent for a mo-

ment. Then he cleared his throat with a nervous, deprecating movement. "Of course, mother wouldn't think of my leaving you, sir, till you're all right again."

"Thank you. If that's the case, you needn't make your arrangements in a hurry, for I'm afraid I never shall be all right again. Miss Wyldé wants me to go to Harcourt to-morrow at three. I dare say she's clinging to the belief that there may be some hope for me. Wayne, I've a good mind to emigrate, too, and do some ranching in the Northwest. Can you ride?"

"Ride, sir? Yes, sir. Mother wants to see me on a horse again. It minds her of father. I was in a training stable till I got too heavy. That's where they broke my nerve."

"Then, if I don't speedily improve, we'll all go together. There's some good ranch land to be had in the Northwest territories."

"Yes, sir."

Wayne relapsed into silence. He could not explain to Graham how he wanted to get away from everything which reminded him of his servitude to Crewe. The racing-stable had "broken his nerve" in the beginning; Crewe's tyranny had long since completed the wreck.

The ebon steeds of death tossed their long manes, and started off at a pompous trot. Both Wayne and the major remained buried in gloomy reflections. The major desired to live and marry Veronica. Wayne wanted to get away from England and begin his life anew. He looked upon himself as an executioner rather than a murderer. Had he not, in all probability, saved the major's life by his timely intervention?

He dressed the major very carefully for his interview with Harcourt on the following afternoon, and saw that he had a good luncheon and a half-bottle of champagne. "It's nervous work facing doctors, sir," he suggested. "You drink this and you won't feel it nearly so much."

The major was touched and amused, but he drank the champagne. "Dutch

courage, Wayne," he said, gravely; "Dutch courage—but I'm not afraid for myself."

Veronica and Mrs. Marjoribanks called for him at a quarter to three, and the swift bays dashed down Harley street as if they were going to a wedding. Veronica looked pale and anxious.

"What are you going to do with me?" the major asked, as the carriage stopped at Harcourt's door.

"Cure you," she said, with a lovely smile. She was afraid to tell him the truth, lest the shock should be too much for him. Harcourt had explained to her that he would have Powerscourt in attendance. Powerscourt was now hopelessly mad, with momentary intervals of sanity. Veronica trusted to one of these intervals, and hoped to make Powerscourt understand what was required of him.

The little, dark doctor sat at the same table, his tablets by his side. A tall, thin man stood close behind him, greatly to Powerscourt's annoyance. He was, if anything, more curt than ever, and his eyes darkened with sudden dislike when he saw the major. "Ah, yes," he mused, "why didn't you come in by yourself without bringing a crowd of your relations to stare at me? You've done as I told you?"

The major, annoyed by his offensive manner, swung curtly on his heel. Harcourt bent over, and whispered something to Powerscourt, who gravely shook his head. "Very sorry to disoblige you, my dear Harcourt," he said, sternly, "but it is most irregular—most unprofessional. I dislike the fellow too much."

"But you'll get me out of a scrape," pleaded Harcourt. "My dear Powerscourt, won't you do it to oblige me?"

"No, no, call the next case. Can't be done," said Powerscourt, decidedly. "Take him away. Whose turn is it now? Where are my notes?"

The quiet man in black bent down to Powerscourt, and whispered something in his ear. Powerscourt shrank from him in affright; his tablets fell to

the ground. "No supper! This is cruel—unworthy. Harcourt, by what right does this bully follow me about when I am attending to my most important cases?"

"You shall have a magnificent supper if you'll only put this man right," whispered Harcourt. "He's an old friend of mine. Do, there's a good fellow."

"No, no! Can't do it!" Powerscourt shook his large head resolutely. "I dislike the man. What did I convey to him by hypnotic suggestion? It isn't on my notes."

A sudden comprehension gleamed in Graham's eyes. He controlled himself by a mighty effort, and came nearer to the table.

"Keep back, sir, keep back!" shouted Powerscourt. "Don't you know that you are robbing me of my supper?"

Graham felt strongly inclined to knock him down. He saw that the man was mad, and it irritated him to think that the others should not see it, too. Why had they brought him there? He clenched his hands resolutely, and turned to Veronica. "Let us get out of this. I don't see any object in staying here," he said, sternly. "This fellow's—"

"Hush! hush!" Veronica raised a warning finger. The next moment, she glided round the table, and found Powerscourt bowing politely to Mrs. Marjoribanks.

"I think you are the next on my list," the poor fellow said, politely, and without a trace of bad temper. "I shall be charmed to attend to you. You're one of the prettiest patients I've had for years."

"Won't you attend to me first?" suggested Veronica. "I have come to ask you to do me a great favor, Dr. Powerscourt."

Powerscourt, in this new excitement, had already forgotten Graham. "Certainly, my dear madam, certainly. Doctors do not often have a chance of ministering to such loveliness." He bowed to her, impressively. "You were asking me?"

"Oh, just a trifle. Perhaps it doesn't really matter, and I am taking up too much of your valuable time."

Veronica smiled down upon him to hide the terror in her eyes.

"My dear madam! Too much of my time? Not at all! not at all! Nay, nay, I insist. Tell me at once."

"But I really do not like to trouble you." Veronica turned half aside.

Powerscourt sprang to his feet. "My dear madam, what have I done that you should treat me thus unkindly? Whatever it is, I promise you. You are excited, troubled. No one ever asked a favor of me in such circumstances, and asked in vain."

Veronica sat down beside him.

"You are so good," she said, softly. "You are quite sure you will do what I want? You promise me?"

"Anything, my dear madam! Anything! Only tell me what it is you want me to do. It isn't"—he looked at her, wistfully—"it isn't to give up my supper? You don't want my supper?"

"Certainly not, doctor; certainly not. You have been so busy lately that you may have forgotten that rather sulky man in the corner. You conveyed to him by means of hypnotic suggestion that he was suffering from heart-disease, although he was quite well at the time."

Powerscourt chuckled horribly.

"So I did, so I did. Hope he's got it by this time. Serve him right."

"He's suffering very much."

"Glad of it, my dear lady, glad of it. Shall I make him worse?"

"No, no! Please make him well again. He—he's so proud of it—so conceited since you have done him the honor to experiment on him. He thinks you can't make him well again, even if you try."

"Thinks that! Conceited puppy!" Powerscourt sprang to his feet. "Takes it in that way, does he! Here, you, sir! Turn round!"

"Turn round—for my sake," Veronica implored Graham, almost under her breath.

With a strong effort, Graham curbed his temper, and faced the little mad doctor. "So, you think, sir," said the latter, furiously, "that I do you the honor to experiment with you just for your own pleasure! Don't answer me, sir! There! there! Now, have you heart-disease? Don't dare to tell me that you have, because you haven't!" Powerscourt made a few strange movements with his hands, and Graham's burden fell from him.

Veronica put her hand on Powerscourt's arm. "How clever you are! How clever you are, doctor!"

Over his head, she made frantic signs to Graham to get out of the room.

Half-dazed, Graham found himself standing outside the door. Harcourt joined him in a moment.

"Your hat? Here it is. Come with me, old man."

He dragged Graham down the steps, and opened the carriage door. "Home!" he almost shouted to the coachman.

And before Graham quite realized what had happened, he was entering Veronica's house, without a trace of disease about him.

The carriage dashed back to Harley street for Veronica and Mrs. Marjoribanks. When it returned with them, Mrs. Marjoribanks gave a little gasp of despair.

"There's the professor's hat," she said. "I know it by the shabby brim. Besides, it hasn't been brushed for the last six weeks. He'll never forgive me if I keep him waiting. Where is the professor, Warburton?"

"In the library, madam."

"W-what's he doing, Warburton?"

"Saying things to the furniture, madam."

"What sort of things?" asked Mrs. Marjoribanks, anxiously.

"Hunpronounceable things, madam," said Warburton, stiffly. But Mrs. Marjoribanks was already halfway to the library door, leaving Veronica and Graham regarding each other with shining eyes.

Veronica turned to Warburton.

"Tea—in the drawing-room—and the library."

The major followed her up the broad staircase, into the drawing-room. She fell into his arms.

The discreet Warburton was an hour late with tea. When the major at length tore himself away from Veronica, he left a five-pound note in Warburton's itching palm.

"Ah, there's nothink like the harmy! The harmy always wins. If I'd known he was going to do that," said Warburton, looking after the major with profound admiration and respect, "I wouldn't have given them any tea at all—that might have brought me in a tenner."

He went up-stairs to the drawing-room on pretense of removing the tea things.

"I beg your pardon, madam—as a hold servant, may I take the liberty?"

"Yes, Warburton, what is it?"

"The servants' 'all is anxious about you and the major, madam; and he's just given me this. It—it seems a homen, madam."

Veronica produced a dainty purse.

"Warburton, you have been with me since I was a child. Your discretion has always seemed to me stronger than your powers of pronouncing the English language."

"Yes, madam? If I——"

"You were an hour late with tea just now—a thing which has never happened before."

"Under the circumstances, madam——"

"Will you kindly hold out your other hand?"

"Yes, madam."

Veronica put another five-pound note into his hand.

Warburton bowed profoundly; his powdered hair almost touched his toes.

"Ham I to hannounce the hevent in the servants' 'all, madam? If I may be hallowed to make the remark, madam, they like the major."

"If—you—please, Warburton. I—I like him, too."

Left alone, Veronica listened to the babble of voices below. Then she

walked slowly across the room, picked up Huntingtower's portrait, and pressed it to her lips.

"You prayed for my happiness—I am happy—so happy—now! Your mother has forgiven me for sending

you to your death. Do you, too, forgive me?"

The dead lad's eyes smiled into hers. Veronica prayed.

It seemed to her such a beautiful world in which to live and love!



AT MOONRISE

PALE faces looked up at me, out of the eve, like flowers;

Pale hands reached down to me, out of the dusk, like stars,
As over the hills, robed on with twilight, the Hours,

The Day's last Hours, departed, and the Night put up her bars.

Pale fingers beckoned me on, pale fingers, like starlit mist;

Dim voices called to me, dim as the wind's dim rune,
As up from the trees, like a nymph from the amethyst

Of her waters, as silver as foam, rose the round, white breast of the moon.

And I followed the pearly waving and beckon of hands,

The luring glitter and dancing glimmer of feet,
And the syllabled whisper of silence, that summoned to lands

Remoter than legend or faëry, where Myth and Tradition meet.

And I came to a place where the shadow of ancient Night

Brooded o'er ruins, far wilder than castles of dreams,
Fantastic, a mansion of phantoms, where, wandering white,

I met with a shadowy Presence whose voice I had followed, it seems.

And the ivy swayed in the wind, and the moonlight laid,

Like a ghostly benediction, a finger on
The Presence there, from whose eyes the darkness rayed,

The Presence I knew for one I had known in the years long gone.

And she looked in my face, and kissed me on brow and on cheek,

Murmured my name, and wistfully smiled in my eyes,
And the tears rose up in my heart that was wild and weak,

And my bosom seemed bursting with yearning, and my soul with sighs.

And there 'mid the ruins we sat. . . . Oh, strange were the words that she
said!—

Secret and sad and strange; but stranger the looks that she gave,
For her voice was the voice of a joy, of a joy that was dead,
And her face was the face of a hope, of a hope deep down in its grave.

MADISON CAWEIN.

THE JOY

THE joy is in the doing,
 Not the deed that's done;
 The swift and glad pursuing,
 Not the goal that's won.

The joy is in the seeing,
 Not in what we see;
 The ecstasy of vision,
 Far and clear and free!

The joy is in the singing,
 Whether heard or no;
 The poet's wild, sweet rapture,
 And song's divinest flow!

The joy is in the being—
 Joy of life and breath;
 Joy of a soul triumphant,
 Conqueror of death!

Is there a flaw in the marble?
 Sculptor, do your best;
 The joy is in the endeavor—
 Leave to God the rest!

JULIA C. R. DORR.



THE WAY IT GOES

MUSINGTON—Ah, yes! you never really know a man until he owes you a debt, either social, political or financial.

GRIMSHAW—And, as a rule, when he does, you are never able to get near enough to him to recognize him, let alone know him.



IT LINGERED WITH HIM

SHE—Mrs. Bryson tells me that she married her husband ten years ago.
 HE—Truly remarkable. And the poor fellow still has a surprised look.

THE WOOD OF YDREN

By Zona Gale

THOUGH the sun was warm on the golden-gray meadow slope, it was not there that the little shepherdess loved to lead her flock. The crests of the hills were swimming in soft light, and breaths from flowered orchards yielded their way over the hills, but it was not there either that she lay in the long mornings. For it is the great green lowlands of Wales that are richest with early Spring magic, and it was in a magic lowland, hill-cradled, that Llorien fed her white flock in Spring.

Llorien was of woman's years, but her face was like the very early flowers. When flowers have not yet seen the sun-bow of a whole day from white east to red west, their little faces are not really alive; it is only after they have borne light, and have been with dew and stars, and have endured a night, that they understand the human eyes that look upon them. And little Llorien's face was like the very early flowers.

For years she had lived alone with old Glaunt, her father. Glaunt was a shepherd, and his image remained always in the hearts of those who had once looked upon him. He was a great, black-browed, black-bearded man with falling black hair. He spoke but little, perhaps because he was an old man, and it had all been said. He went among the gray hills, and stood black among his flocks, his shepherd's cloak blowing about his shoulders. All the country-side knew him, and responded gladly to his silent greeting. Many of the wool-combers and sheep-shearers feared him, as children fear the silence. But

old Gervyl, who lived near the fens, and who brewed strange distillations for the ailing sheep, knew that he loved the little four-petaled "silver-skins" that grew in the marsh, and she would send her boy to him across the early fields with a night's birth of them, or, it might be, with but a single silver stem to be drawn in his wide hat. Old Gervyl and her boy and little Llorien were the only ones who did not fear Glaunt, and they, too, loved to wear the strange little silver flowers.

Down in the lowland where Llorien fed her flock, the meadow was like a great green hall. On three sides, pleasant hills budded from the earth, and bore sweet odors which were neither of bloom nor of wind. Sometimes idle, white clouds rested on the curved summits of the hills like airy altars; and, when the evening star first burned above them—a silver priest come among his vessels—little Llorien led home her flock. This she was always unwilling to do, for the long, warm hours in the field were her delight. All day, she lay deep in the scented grass, facing the south where gloomed a purple wood—the Wood of Ydren. And it was because she feared and loved the Wood of Ydren that she spent her days upon its threshold.

A great violet cave of trees it was, miles deep, and, for aught Llorien knew, pathless. It was true that Cynan, son of a tradesman of Glastonbury, had told her that he had come through the wood with his father, carrying a load of leather to Caer, but Cynan was not to be believed. She

remembered scornfully how he had assured her that no flowers bloomed in the wood. No flowers in the Wood of Ydren! Llorien would as soon have believed that there were no fairies with harps making the music of the wind.

What it was that drew her to the wood's edge day by day, she could not have told. Near her father's cot was a little wood where trim, familiar flowers grew, pretending to be wild, but these could not deceive Llorien. She knew them every one—thistle-wort, witch-wort, glove-buds and little nodding spirilis. Beyond this domestic little wood was a meadow, and in this meadow grew sweet-smelling grasses, and, on clear mornings, one might see, through a blue cleft in the hills, the spires of Glastonbury; but here Llorien never spent an hour. Past her father's flock she went, and straight to the lowland at the edge of the Wood of Ydren. Perhaps something wonderful would happen there that day. Only yesterday she had fancied that she heard the faint fluting of a horn; and once she had been sure that she caught the flutter of a silver sleeve.

One morning Llorien rose with a happy heart and her mind filled with a dream. Not that her mind was ever seriously filled with anything but dreams, but she usually wove them while she woke, and this was a dream of sleep. When she had made breakfast for her father, she took a little skin of milk, and a basket of reeds, filled with goat's cheese and bread and berries, and she set off across the grass for the lowland, singing as she went, so that any little night people, left by chance in the meadow, might hear her in time, and escape. And the song she sang was one that had come to her in her dream—a dream in which strange silver faces had looked at her from the purple cave of trees, chanting:

"We are they who have gathered an aspen flower

And have kissed it to red.

We are they who are snaring a silver bird
From its border bed.

"Lay the red blossom upon her red mouth,
Follow the silver bird far to the south,
But drink of the days of the Ydren Wood
No more till the flower be dead."

The three hills echoed her song pleasantly, the sheep scattered, bleating, over the wide, smiling field, and Llorien, venturing so near the wood that she could see the delicate shadows on the moss, sat down to wait.

Ronald Edgar always became an immediate part of any picture in which he found himself. Perhaps this was because he was young, and his heart sang within him, and because he lived every moment as if it were an unreal, painted moment, and not at all a part of the life that was some time to begin for him. He was, you will see, a poet. And he came out of the Wood of Ydren that morning into the lowland where white Spring was rioting and the little shepherdess was watching her flock, looking quite as if he had been painted in place by some kind god. As for Llorien, watching him breathlessly, she had always known that the wood must some day yield her something wonderful; and that it had come now was no miracle. It was simply as if she were dreaming a dream a little more real than her other dreams. Who shall say, therefore, that little Llorien, too, was not a poet?

Llorien's little red bodice and plaid kirtle and white sleeves, and the straying sheep against the sunny gray meadow, pleased Ronald's eyes. He smiled for the sake of the beauty of it all, and he raised his face and came forward smiling—a slim, gray figure with fair, uncovered head. Llorien thought of him always afterward with his face uplifted.

"Is there no pale shepherdess left in Lesbos?" he quoted, under his breath. And aloud he said:

"Good morning, little shepherdess. I saw a white thrush in the wood just now!"

Llorien regarded him gravely. He had spoken in her own tongue.

"That thrush is my friend," said Llorien, simply. "Every day I feed

him goat's cheese and crumbs from my basket."

Ronald strolled nearer.

"But why do you not take him home," he asked, "in that 'little hand-prison of woven reeds'?"

Llorien looked at him in surprise. "You must be one of the wicked wood-gods, after all," she said. "I thought, when I first saw you, that you were a beautiful, good one."

Ronald laughed delightedly, and threw himself on the grass beside her. Alas, his face was too beautiful to be a god's, but Llorien did not know.

"I will be a good god," he promised, "if you will let me stay a little while. Can you tell me the name of that wood?"

"We call it the Wood of Ydren," said Llorien.

"The Wood of Ydren, the Wood of Ydren," repeated Ronald, luxuriously, "the Wood of Ydren."

Llorien leaned forward. "What do you call it?" she asked, eagerly; "you and the other wood-gods?"

"Oh," said Ronald, "we call it the Wood of the Dark Star. You see," he went on, idly, "I am the god of the Dark Star."

"Well," said Llorien, "I am the Lady Silverskins—because of these flowers that my father loves. You may call me that, if you like."

Ronald watched her with an amused smile. She was very lovely, and it delighted him to find her so alive to his bits of fancy and so serious about her own. A little shepherdess, with her head singing with his own dreams! A little living girl, with a fancy wild as a fairy's and an accidental loveliness besides!

Llorien sighed, contentedly. It was wonderful to have some one near who did not talk of sheep-shearing at every breath, like Cynan. It was wonderful to have some one near who was not always silent, like her father, or lamenting, like old Gervyl. Why, this strange wood-god, with his face uplifted and his tongue sweet with names musical, was her kin, nearer to her than her austere cousins in Glastonbury,

nearer than Glaunt himself! Llorien did not understand, but she was very happy.

"Tell me about your friends," said Ronald.

Llorien began at once. "There is the white thrush," she said, "he is first. Then there is old Gervyl, and she tells me about the countries where all the fairies are dead, and it makes me cry. There is her boy, whose brain has got wrong—but he knows where the greenest little eggs are, and he never breaks them. And there is Cynan, who takes a long time to eat, and shakes the table when he laughs. If Cynan were to come here now, he would not see you. He wouldn't see anything but how fat the sheep are. Those are all my friends."

Ronald drew nearer and watched her breathlessly.

"And the wood-gods?" he said. "Surely you know other wood-gods, Lady Silverskins?"

"No, I don't," she said; "and yet I never really think of anything else, either. But I have never met any god but you."

Ronald drew a deep breath.

"O Lady Silverskins!" he said, "O Lady Silverskins!"

He shared her little luncheon that day, and added to it a flagon of thin wine and some fruit. All the day while the sun was high, and until the shadows slanted, they talked together. She found for him strange little flowers hidden in the grass, and he taught her to hear half-notes of birds, and to see far colors that she had not dreamed. He lay on the grass and sang to her—strange beautiful words in a strange tongue, so that she wept and "knew not wherefore." He repeated long, soft poems in her own language, wherein was some joy which she could not unravel. And, when the twilight fell, he walked beside her across the thick grass, trodden by the little beating hoofs before them, and the three hills upheld a white scimiter of moon—the sword of silver flame that always hangs over the gate of every Eden.

"Now I must give you three things,"

said the little shepherdess, "or you will not be able to find me again."

She bent to gather a spray of witch-wort by a great stone.

"This," she said, "and the ribbon in my hair—and what else?"

"This," said Ronald.

She raised her face quite simply for his kiss.

"It doesn't matter," she said, shyly, "because not a bit of all this is really happening."

Ronald watched her little figure glimmer into the dusk.

"Wonderful little child," he said, "how she knows! She knows!"

The Wood of Ydren was sweet with singing birds and singing leaves and early slanting sun, the next morning when Ronald brushed his way through the mile of dew that lay between his Glastonbury inn and the lowland meadow. He was early—earlier than Llorien, and he had a capful of brown and pink witch-wort by the time she came over the hill, surrounded by her white sheep.

"You *are* real, after all," he cried, joyously, hastening to her, "or you would not have come again!"

She smiled, and sat down on a great Druid temple-stone, and beckoned him beside her.

"It is strange of you, Wood-God," she said, "always to talk about things being real. What difference can that make? We are both here."

Ronald shook his head, a little wistfully.

"It is not enough," he said, as a man will say.

Llorien stretched her slim, brown little arms up to the blue with a childish gesture.

"I love the whole world," she cried, "and everything in it. I don't care whether it is real or not."

The man shook his head.

"It is not enough," he said again.

It was delicious to watch Llorien through the long mornings. Sometimes she sang to him softly, with her eyes shut; sometimes she braided her hair in the sun; sometimes, to her faint, sweet little piping, she kept time

with her slim, brown arms, wound with flowers; when the fancy seized her, she put leaves in her hair, and danced for him on the Druid stone. And in the warmth of Ronald's presence and sympathy, her rich, waiting soul answered as a harp to the wind—aye, as a harp to the human hand that loves it. And all his store of fancy and affectionate understanding of beautiful things, Ronald poured out to her. Lore of all strange people, beautiful words and even radiant facts he told her, and bit by bit he taught her her own wonder. Her ignorance about things that were his own spiritual breath touched Ronald strangely. That she had actually never known this name, or that marvelous music, or some poem that was to him a quality of the universe, like the stars, appealed powerfully to him, and made him wonder the more that she had come to know true things so truly without their interposition.

"Suppose," he said to her one day, "that we were to see Arthur come pacing from the wood on a black charger, with Guinevere beside him, the sun on the silver trappings and on her gold hair. What would we do?"

She looked at him with wide eyes.

"Tell me about them," she said, simply; and Ronald found, almost with tears, that she had lived in Arthur's own land, in sight of the spires of Glastonbury, and did not know his name. And, while he told her of the knights, and how, though Arthur had been buried at Avalon, where her sheep came from, his body was inhumed at Glastonbury, and how Guinevere's long hair of plaited gold was found untouched by death—a black shadow loomed near, and Llorien turned with a cry to see her father watching them. When he heard what Ronald was telling her, Glaunt nodded in silence and walked away.

"I wonder whether father could see you, Wood-God," said Llorien, childishly; "can anybody see you but me?"

Ronald looked after the black figure of Glaunt, having the austerity and distinction of an old Norman king.

He noted the little silver wild flower tucked in his hat.

"I think he can," said Ronald, nodding, "yes, I think that your father would see."

"Old Gervyl can see you," said Llorien, "she has come often to the wall and looked across. But she talks with fairies. She is not afraid. Only Cynan could not see you."

"Who is Cynan?" asked Ronald, curiously. "You speak often of him; who is he?"

Llorien regarded him, gravely.

"I am going to marry Cynan some day soon," she answered.

"Going to marry Cynan?" repeated Ronald, dully.

"Yes," said Llorien, "after you have gone away, Wood-God."

"But if I don't go away!" cried Ronald.

"You will," answered Llorien, tranquilly, "wood-gods never stay."

Ronald looked away at the hills, and the meadow suddenly lost its wonder and was dull and sordid.

"Will you be happy?" he asked, at length.

"I used to wonder that, too, when I first loved you," said Llorien, "but I always knew that you must go away. And I must live."

"You love me!" cried Ronald.

"Why, yes," said Llorien, in surprise, "haven't we said so?"

"Yes," said Ronald, "yes, I suppose we have. But it isn't true if you can marry Cynan."

Llorien laughed.

"Oh, yes, it is," she cried; "you are only a wood-god. Nearly every woman, old Gervyl says, loves some wood-god best—but she is married happily, for all that."

Ronald looked at her with frightened eyes.

"Little child," he cried, "how did you know that?"

"You will always be my wood-god," Llorien went on, "but I shall marry Cynan and never see you. And he could not see you if he were to stand here now."

Ronald looked into her eerie little

face, and down, down into her deep eyes. She was so fragily lovely, so delicately made, so exquisitely alive. Why, here was his wonder, his joy—the marvel for which he had sought to and fro on the earth, and despaired of ever finding! What of her crudities! He had not been there to form her. But now he would be, now he would be! Whatever this mysterious knowledge might be that was binding them together as no other ties can bind, she also had the knowledge. And he could not lose her. He bent swiftly and gathered her in his arms.

"Llorien," he cried, his lips upon her mouth, "Llorien! Don't let us lose each other. Oh, little child, don't let us lose each other! Don't let them take you away!"

She was still for a moment, and her face close to his was radiant. She was still, and she was happy; but she knew—wise little shepherdess who had found things out alone—she knew that what they dreamed must never be.

"Wood-God! Wood-God!" she sobbed then, clinging to him, "why didn't they make you just a man for me to love—yes, even a man like Cynan. At last I know—I know! And I wish you had been like Cynan!"

"But I am a man!" cried Ronald, "and I love you, Llorien, and I want to be always with you, and with no one else in the world."

She drew away from him, smiling through her tears.

"No," she said, shaking her head, "you are not real. You must go back to the other gods. I'm not Llorien to you. I'm only Lady Silverskins. Good-bye, Wood-God."

"Little child! little child!" he cried, holding out his arms.

"Good-bye, Wood-God," she said again.

Ronald went blindly through the Wood of Ydren, back to the inn in Glastonbury. And, alone in the wood, he was as miserable as he had ever been in his light, beautiful life.

"Good God!" he cried, "to think that I must lose the joy from my life because that wonderful little child

chances to have been a shepherdess and cannot understand that I am real. But, ah, how she understands everything else in the world! I shall love her all my life, and no one else."

To the Glastonbury inn that night there came a letter for Ronald Edgar, in exquisite little writing, like veins on the paper. Ronald read it, and, as he read, he felt an infinite longing for peace and order and a place to rest. He remembered the hand that had traced the letter—how strong and alive it was, how eager to serve him, how it had rested on his hair. As he sat there in the half-light of the little inn room, he looked in the eyes of the far-away woman who had written, and he knew in what loneliness she was waiting for him. He remembered her little housewifely care, her tenderness, her long-suffering—how long and in what anguish!—and a great yearning came over him for just the dear presence of her love—the love that loved him because she must, because she knew no other way. He held out his arms in the dark like a tired child.

"Little mother," he cried, "come and take me away!"

So Ronald went back to the white cliffs and the white villas of his own land, and the woman was waiting for him, all joy and all tenderness. And there he made a home for her, and he lived through happy years, watching her about her little duties, watching a certain exquisite fashion she had of lowering her head as she talked, loving the peace and the care and the quiet of his life with her. And if sometimes he dreamed alone on the white terrace at evening, it was not of Llorien, though it was of the life that they shared—the life of which the tender little woman within doors knew no more than she knew of the real wonder of the man whom she loved with her whole loyal heart.

"Have you ever loved any one else, beloved, as you love me?" she would ask, a little wistfully when she was feeling, but could not fathom, his exquisite aloofness.

"Now see, dear—see," he would say, "a dream or two I may have had—but I must have my foolish dreams. But they were wild dreams, after all, while our dream is all peace. No, I have never loved any one but you."

Then she was content. He had answered in a tongue strange to her, but she could read the light in his eyes, and she was content. And to himself he said:

"Yes, they were wild dreams, after all. Here is rest. It is better so."

Near the lowland on the edge of the Wood of Ydren lived Llorien and Cynan. In the evenings when the sheep were in the fold, the two would sit outside their door, and warm winds coming over the hills would bring to Llorien sound of a late bird-note or tinkle of a far sheep-bell, or odor of the sweets of the air. Llorien would sit near the door so that she might hear the sleepy stir of little Cedell or Edval within, and her hands were heavy in her lap from their long day's toil. Drowsing on the bench near by, his pipe fallen from his lips, would lie Cynan. Sometimes he would start and arch his brows sleepily as he looked at her.

"What did you say?" he would ask, thickly.

"Nothing," Llorien would answer.

"What do you see over there?" he would persist, fretfully. And Llorien, her eyes turned always toward the purple cave of trees, would answer:

"Nothing."

For no far, faint horn ever came from the Wood of Ydren now, and she never thought to catch the flutter of a silver sleeve.

Sometimes Cynan, pausing on his way to his tobacco-bag, would lay his hand heavily on her shoulder, and ask:

"Is anything the matter? Are you worrying over the lambs? Is anything the matter?"

And Llorien, suffering the caress, would answer:

"Nothing."

Old Glaunt, leaning against the riven tree near the cot, looked on and

was silent, but he remembered the old days, and sometimes he smote his forehead, and wondered. Old Gervyl, toiling across the wold with her short skirt filled with silver skins, looked on, too, and remembered the days when she watched by the wall, but she wondered aloud:

"Will the wood-god never come back?" she would ask.

"Aye," Llorien would answer, "perhaps he is here all the time, and I am

like Cynan—and cannot see him. But I think the wood-god is dead. It is better so."

But a wise man, who learned the story as he walked one day in the Wood of Ydren, could not be certain.

"The Wood of Ydren," he repeated, lingering lovingly over the name, "the wood-god, and Lady Silverskins, and the Wood of Ydren. These things are strange and terrible. But, tell me, why is it better so?"



ENOUGH FOR ME

ENOUGH for me, a fire-lit spot,
The world shut out, grim care forgot;
And near me, in the rosy glow,
A sweet girl rocking to and fro—
I'faith! mine is a happy lot!

An earthen kettle, steaming hot,
A pipe, a book of tender plot,
A glance, a smile, a kiss or so—
Enough for me.
To-day a palace, not a cot,
Ten clubs, an auto and a yacht
Are mine. A smile? a kiss? ah, no!
That dull content was years ago;
Now all my minted wealth is not
Enough for me!

JENNIE BETTS HARTSWICK.



TIMELY WARNING

FORTUNE-TELLER—Beware of the handsome man with dark eyes and brilliant diamond pin.

FAIR MAID—Why?

"You can't support him."

THE LAST TIME

SOME day the slanting sunbeams on the floor
 To one of us will give no kindly light,
 For all the world will change to darkest night
 The hour the Reaper pauses at our door;
 Some day a heart that hungers, stabbed and sore,
 Will strive to bear its bitter cross aright;
 With hands that falter and with dimming sight
 The one will seek the other evermore.

So let each word be tender, and the touch,
 So gentle, grow each day more gentle still,
 For Love's dear day will vanish all too fast;
 And, at the end, since we have loved so much,
 A lingering peace the sore heart may distil—
 Remembering the kiss that was the last.

MYRTLE REED.



ANXIOUS TO KNOW

A LICE—He is a dissolute young man.
 GERTRUDE—But he is to be married soon.
 "What a shame! Who is the hateful thing?"



WOULD HAVE BORNE IT ALONE

J. AXSON BOND—Would you have loved me had I been poor?
 SHE—Certainly, my love; but I'd have kept you in blissful ignorance of the fact.



TIME WILL TELL

SINGLETON—Oh, I'm no fool.
 DOUBLETON—Don't be too sure about it. I used to talk in that strain before I was married.

THE BLUE PEAR

By Arthur Stringer

DURKIN sat at the café table, smoking, his watch in his hand. It was already seven minutes to four. As the seventh minute slipped into the sixth, and the sixth into the fifth, some first, vague sense of impending disaster stole over him.

"Is this seat taken, sir?"

It was a waiter speaking, with a short, florid man at his heels.

"Yes," said Durkin, quietly, "I'm expecting a lady—in five minutes."

The florid man bowed. The waiter said "Yes, sir," tipped the chair against the table edge, and went on in search of a seat.

Durkin smoked hard once more, relishing the irony of it all. He did not, naturally enough, explain that the lady he was expecting had made the engagement two thousand miles away from the table at which he sat and at which he was to meet her precisely on the stroke of four. Such things were theatrical, and unnecessary; besides, one had to allow for accidents. And once more, with a puzzled brow, he took up his paper and looked through the *Teutonic's* passenger-list, still involuntarily cast down by a wayward sense of possible calamity.

He imagined some dark coalition of forces against him, obscurely depressed for the moment, by the shadow of some immense, seemingly impassive, and yet implacable, animosity of eternal rule toward the accidental revolter. The same vague feeling had possessed him the day he first abandoned his operator's key and became an "overhead guerrilla." Still later it had come to him, when, dazzled by the splendor of

a vast hazard, he joined forces with the notorious MacNutt and became a professional wire-tapper, so audaciously and yet so cautiously bleeding Penfield's pool-rooms, in the very teeth of Inspector Doogan and his men. Still, he argued with himself, that had been a victory of intelligence—and would not victory always be with the alerter mind and the wariest hand? Would they not still meet and combat, point by point, this vague and mysterious enemy whose emissaries, even though relentless, were always so temptingly dull?

A woman, dressed in black, with a dark veil caught up around the rim of her hat, pushed her way through the crowded café toward the table in the corner. She might have passed for a mere girl, but for the heavy shadows about the weary-looking, violet eyes and the betraying fullness of her womanly breast and hips. She glanced at the clock, and smiled a little, with her calm, almost pensive lips, as she placed a pearl-gloved hand on the back of the tilted chair.

"I am on time, you see," she said, quietly, in her soft contralto, as she sank into the chair with a contented sigh, and began drawing off her gloves. "It is precisely four o'clock."

"Why, Mame!" cried Durkin, with eloquent enough inadequacy, his face paling a little, for all his assumption of easy fortitude. He continued to look at her, a sudden lump in his throat choking back the hundred stampeding words that seemed clamoring to escape. For one wavering moment she let her eyes lose their studied calmness, and, inwardly surrendering, gazed at

him recklessly, abandonedly, with her very soul in her face.

"Dearest!" she whispered to him, with her back to the crowded room.

He tried to seize her ungloved hand in his, but she drew him up with a sudden monitory "Hsssh!" Then he, too, remembered, and they took up their rôle again.

"Now, you want, I know, a good silver fizz, and I want a nice, old-fashioned, warm milk-punch. For, oh, Jim, I'm tired right out!"

Durkin called his waiter and gave him the order, puffing his cigar with assumed insolence of unconcern, while the woman murmured across the table to him:

"You look quite foreign, with that magnificent Vandyke! And, by the way, how do you like my English bang?"

"Why, it's dyed!" said Durkin, for the first time missing the sunny glint in the familiar crown of chestnut.

"Jim," said the woman, in lower tones, sobering, "there's trouble ahead!"

She drew her chair a little closer, and leaned forward, with her elbows on the table and her chin in her hands. Durkin lighted another cigar, and lounged toward her with the same careless pose, his face alert with a new and different interest.

"You don't mean Doogan's men?"

"Not so loud, dear! No, not Doogan's men. It's nothing like that. But first tell me, quickly, has anything gone wrong over here?"

"Not a thing—except that you were away."

"But hasn't anything happened since I saw you?"

"Nothing worth while. It's been so dull, so deadly dull, I almost jumped back into the old game, and held up a pool-room or two. Five whole weeks of—of just waiting for you!"

She caught up her veil, where a part of it drooped from her hat-brim, and smiled her wistfully girlish smile at him. Then she glanced carefully about her; no one seemed within ear-shot.

"Yes, I know. It seemed just as long to me, dearest. Only I had to jump into something. That's what I must tell you about—but we can't talk here."

"Then we'll have William call a hansom?"

"Not a hansom, Jim—a four-wheeler. We can talk there without having a driver lifting a lid over our heads every two minutes.

"Do you know," she went on, dreamily, as she watched the waiter push out through the crowded, many-odored room, "I often think I must have lived through all the ordinary feelings of life. I mean that we have taken such chances together, you and I, that now only a big thing can stir me into interest. I suppose we have exhausted all the everyday sensations of life!"

"Yes, I know the feeling," said Durkin, through his cigar-smoke. "I suppose it's really a sort of drunkenness with us now. I couldn't go back to the other things, any more than I could go back to—to stogies. All this last five weeks of hanging about I've felt like—oh, like a sailor who'd pounded round every strange sea in all the world, and has come home to be told not to go out of his own backyard."

"That's how I felt in London, with nothing to do, nothing to think about, or plan, or live for. I got so I nearly screamed every time I faced the four dull walls of that hotel room. But, you see, we have both fallen back on the wrong sort of stimulant. Neither of us two should ever have been evil-doers. I'm too much—oh, too much like other women, I suppose! And you're too thin-skinned and introspective—too much of a Hamlet! You should never have tapped a wire; and I should never have been a welcher and robbed MacNutt. You ought to have gone on being a nice, respectable young train-despatcher, with a row of geraniums in front of your station-window; and I ought to be a prim little branch-office telegrapher, in one of those big Broadway hotel corridors,

in a little wire cage between the news-stand and the cigar-counter. Then we should both have a lot to look for and to live for!"

She broke off, inconsequentially, and gazed out through the lightly-curtained café window, to where a street-piano was throbbing out the waltz-tune of "Sammy."

"Do you remember our little inn at Cumnor last Spring, and the first time you ever heard an English cuckoo? You said it was my voice, set to music! Oh, what a happy two weeks those were!" And she gazed at him dreamily, as she hummed the tune of "Sammy" in her throaty, low-noted contralto, ending with a nonchalant little laugh as she looked up and said, "But here's our cab, at last!"

In the half-light of the carriage, as they turned into Fifth avenue and swung up toward Central Park, she let her tired body rest against his shoulder, with her arm clinging to him forlornly. There was a minute or two of silence, and then putting her face up to him, she said, with a sudden passionate calmness,

"Kiss me!"

He felt the moist warmth of her capitulating lips, the clinging weight of her inert body, and, deep down within his own consciousness, he knew that, if need be, he could die for her as the purest knight might have died for some old-world lady of spotless soul and name. Yet, after all, he wondered, as he held her there, were they so irretrievably bad? Was it not only their game, this life they had drifted into—their anodyne, their safeguard against exhausted desire and the corroding idleness of life?

She must intuitively have felt what was running through his mind, as she slipped away from him, and drew back into her own corner of the carriage, with a new look of brooding melancholy in her shadowy eyes.

"If I were ignorant, and coarse, and debased, then I could understand it. But I'm not! I have always wanted to be honest. From the first, I have longed to be decent!"

"You *are* honest, through and through," he protested. "You are as strong and true as steel!"

She shook her head, but he caught her in his arms, and she lay there half-happy again.

"Oh, Mame, for the twentieth time," he pleaded, "won't you marry me?"

"No, no, no; not till we're honest!" she cried, in alarm. "I wouldn't dare to, I couldn't, until then."

"But we're only what we have been. We can't change it all in a day, can we? Especially when there's so much behind!"

"I want to be decent!" she cried, in a sort of muffled wail. "No, no; I can't marry you, Jim—not yet! We may not be honest with other people, but we must be honest with ourselves!"

A policeman, directing the crowded street traffic at Forty-second street, glanced in at them through the misty cab-window and smiled broadly. It seemed to remind her of other worlds, for she at once sat up more decorously.

"Time! time! We're losing time—and I have so much to tell you."

"Then give me your hand to hold while you talk."

She hesitated for a half-laughing moment, and then surrendered it.

"Now, tell me everything, from the first."

II

"It's the Blue Pear," she said, hesitatingly, wondering how to begin.

"And just what is that?"

"You have never heard of the Blue Pear?"

"Never!"

"But you wouldn't, of course—most of it happened after you had sailed. The Blue Pear, Jim, is a diamond. It's a diamond that you and I, in some way or another, have got to get back!"

"To get back? Then when did we lose it?"

"I lost it. That's what I've got to tell you."

"Well, first tell me what it is."

"It's a very odd diamond, and a very big diamond, tinted with the same

pale-blue coloring as the Hope diamond. That's how it came to get its name. But the odd thing about it is that, when it was cut in Amsterdam, rather than grind away a fifteen-carat irregularity, it was left in a sort of pear-shape. Even before it was mounted by Lalique, it sold in Paris for well over four thousand pounds. Later, in Rio de Janeiro, it brought something like five thousand pounds. There it was given to a French actress by a Spanish-American coffee-king. It was an African stone in the first place."

"But what's all this geography for?" asked Durkin.

"Wait, dear, and you'll understand. The coffee-king quarreled with the Paris woman. This woman, though, smuggled the stone back to France with her. It was sold there, a few months later, for about one-fourth its market value. Still later, it was bought for a little under six thousand pounds, by the late Earl of Warton, who gave it to his younger daughter, Lady Margaret Singford, when she married young Cicely—Sir Charles Cicely, who was wounded in the Boer War, you remember. Well, Sir Charles didn't like the setting—it had been made into a marquise ring of some sort—so he took it to René Lalique's workshop, in Paris, and had it mounted after his own ideas."

"But who is Lalique?"

"A French *l'art nouveau* goldsmith—the Louis Tiffany of the Continent. But I've a lot to tell you, Jim, and only a little time to do it in, so we shall have to cut out these details. Lalique made a pendant out of the Blue Pear, hung on a thin gold stem, between little leaves of beaten gold, with diamond dew-drops on them. Well, four weeks ago the Blue Pear was stolen from Lady Margaret's jewel-case. No, Jim, thank you, not by me; but, if you'll wait, I shall try to explain."

"I hardly know now what made me do it—it was *ennui* and being lonesome, I suppose. But I had detective-agency cards printed, and went straight to the Cicelys. Lady Margaret

wouldn't see me; she sent down word that the reward of a thousand pounds was still open and that there was no new information. But I saw her at last—I sha'n't explain just how. Before very long I found out something rather remarkable—I mean the fact that Lady Margaret wanted to drop the case altogether, and was rather trying to blind Scotland Yard and the police. And that started me thinking."

"Before the end of the week, I found out that Lady Margaret's young brother had made a mess of things at Oxford, had been mixed up later in a row at Monaco, and had decided to try ranching in the Canadian Northwest. I had already booked my passage on the *Deutschland*, but the whole thing was too alluring, and, when I found young Singford was sailing that week on the *Teutonic*, I succeeded in getting a berth on that steamer. Jim, as soon as I saw that wretched boy on deck I knew I had guessed right, or almost right. Oh, I know them, I know them! I suppose it's because I've been mixed up with so many of them. But there he was, as plain as day, a criminal with stage-fright, a beginner without enough nerve to face things out. I rather think he may have been a nice boy at one time. And I know just how easy it is, once you make the first little wrong turn, to keep on and on and on, until you daren't turn back, even if you had the chance to."

"And you took pity on him?" inquired Durkin; "or merely vivisected him—at a distance?"

"Not altogether—but first I must tell you of the second dilemma. Before we sailed, and the first day out, I thought it best to keep to my cabin—you know why, of course. After all, this is such a little world when the Central office is after you! That was precisely what I thought, only a good deal harder, when I sat down to dinner, the second day out, and glanced across the table. You remember my telling you about my first trouble in America, when I was a shrinking and pink-cheeked young English governess, and never knew a bold thought

or a dishonest act? Do you remember my describing the woman—it's always a woman who is hard on another woman!—who accused me of—of having designs on her husband? Her husband, a miserable, oily, little Hebrew diamond-merchant who twice insulted me on the stairs of his own house, and I had to swallow it without a word! Well, it was that woman who sat across the table from me. They had put me at the captain's table—my London gown, you see, looks uncommonly well. But there was that woman, a little more faded and wizened and wrinkled, looking at me with those beady old hawk-eyes of hers; and I knew there was trouble ahead.

"A war-correspondent, who had been nice to me, had brought up about everybody at our table worth while, and introduced them to me that night before going down. So, when I saw that yellow face and those hawk-eyes, I knew I had to think hard and fast.

"'Are you not the young woman,' she said, in a sort of nasal scream of indignation, 'are you not the young woman whom I once employed as a governess and discharged for misconducting herself with—er—with the other servants?'

"I was so busy trying to be cool that I didn't bother thinking out an answer, though I did want to say it was not a servant, but her own devoted husband. I kept on talking to the captain, deciding to ignore her icily. But that yellow hag deliberately repeated her question, and I heard the war-correspondent gasp out an indignant 'My God, madam!' and saw the captain's face growing redder and redder. So I went on sweetly, and asked the ship's doctor if intoxication was getting commoner on the high seas. Then she began to splutter and tremble. I kept looking at her as languidly as ever, and a steward had to help her away.

"But she knew she was right. And she knew that I knew she knew. Though I had all the men on my side, and the captain cheerfully saw to it that she was moved down among the commercial travelers and the school-

ma'ams, I knew well enough that she was only waiting for her chance.

"It didn't change the face of things, but it upset me, and made me more cautious in the way I handled young Singford. In some way, I felt sorry for the poor devil. I thought a little sympathy might perhaps soften him, and make him tell me something worth while. But he had too much good old English backbone for that. And, although he told me I was the best woman he ever knew, and a little more solemn nonsense like that, I at last had to go for him very openly. It was a moonlight night—the sea air was as soft as Summer. We were standing by the rail, looking out over the water. Then I made the plunge, and very quietly told him I knew he had stolen his sister's diamond pendant, and that for two days he had been thinking about committing suicide.

"I watched his hand go up to his breast-pocket—the moon was on his terrified young face—and I came a little nearer to him, for I was afraid of something—I tried to tell him there was no use jumping overboard, and none whatever in throwing the Blue Pear there—that would only make things past mending, forever. Besides, he was young, and his life was still before him. I talked to him—well, I believe I cried over him a little. And finally, without a word, he reached in under his coat, and there in the moonlight handed me the Blue Pear. I gave him my word of honor it would be taken back to his sister, and even lent him twenty pounds. That was the night before we came up the Bay.

"I slipped down to my cabin, and turned on the electric-light. Then I opened the little case and looked at my pendant. You know I never liked diamonds, they always seemed so cold and hard and cruel—well, as though the tears of a million women had frozen into one drop. But this Blue Pear—oh, Jim, it was a beautiful thing!"

"It was—good heavens, you don't mean—?"

"Shhhh! Not so loud! Yes, that is just it. There I stood trying it in the light, feasting on it, when a voice said behind me, a voice that made my hair creep at the roots, 'A very unsafe stone to smuggle, young lady!' and there, just inside my door, stood the yellow hag. She had stolen down, I suppose, to nose among my luggage a bit. I could have killed her—I almost did try it.

"We stood staring at each other; it was the second battle of the kind on board that ship. I realized she had the upper hand in this one. I never saw such envy and greed and cruelty in a human face, as she ogled that stone.

"It seemed to intoxicate her—she was drunk to get her hands on it—and she had enough of her own, too. So, once more, I had to think hard and fast, for I knew this time she would be relentless.

"No, I sha'n't smuggle it," I said, in answer to her look.

"You pay duty—a thousand, two thousand dollars!" she gasped at me, still keeping her eyes on the stone, flashing there in the light. "Given to you," she hissed, "by some loving father whose child you guided into the paths of wisdom? Oh, I know you, you lying hussy! It's mine!" she cried, like a baby crying for the moon. "It's mine! You—you stole it from me!"

She paused, at the memory of the scene, and Durkin stirred uneasily on the seat.

"What made the fool say that?" he demanded.

"Why, she meant that she intended to claim it, insinuating that she would see that it was declared at the wharf if I kept it, and arguing that I might as well lose it quietly to her, as to the treasury officers. I knew in a flash, then, that she didn't know what the Blue Pear was. I closed the little gun-metal case with a snap. Then I put it, Blue Pear and all, in her hand. She turned white, and asked me what I meant.

"I'm going to give it to you," I said,

as coolly as I could, making a virtue of what I felt was going to be a necessity.

"She tore open the case, looked at the stone, weighed it in her fingers, gasped a little, held it to the light again, and then turned and looked at me.

"This pendant was stolen!" she cried, with sudden conviction. She looked at the stone again—she couldn't resist it.

"You might call it the Robin's Egg, when you have it recut!" I told her.

"She gave a jump—that was what she was thinking of, the shrewd old rascal. She shoved the case down in her lean old breast.

"Then you will smuggle it in for me?" I asked her.

"Yes, I'll get it through, if I have to swallow it!"

"And you will keep it?" I asked; and I laughed, I don't know why.

"You remember my house?" she cried, with a start.

"Like a book!" I told her.

"But still I'll keep it!" she declared.

"It was a challenge, a silly challenge, but she didn't seem to realize that keeping the Blue Pear was like trying to conceal a white elephant, or attempting to hide away a mountain. Then that cruel, old, avaricious, over-dressed, natural-born criminal had her turn at laughing—a little hysterically, I think. And, for a minute or two, I felt that all the world had gone mad, that we were only two gray, gibbering ghosts talking in the enigmas of insanity, penned up in throbbing cages of white-enameled iron.

"I followed her out of the cabin, and walked up and down alone in the moonlight, wondering if I had done right. At the wharf, I fully intended to risk everything and inform on her, then cable to the Cicelys. But she must have suspected something like that—my stewardess had already told me there were two treasury department detectives on board—and got her innings first. For I found myself quietly taken in charge, and my luggage gone

over with a microscope—to say nothing of the gentle old lady who massaged me so apologetically from head to foot, and seemed put out to find I had nothing more dutiable than an extra pair of French gloves.”

“Had you expected this beforehand?” interposed Durkin.

“Yes, the stewardess had told me there was trouble ahead—that’s what made me afraid about the Blue Pear. Just as I got safely through customs, though, I caught sight of the yellow hag despatching her maid and luggage home in a four-wheeler, while she herself sailed away in another. I felt so sure she was going straight to her husband’s store—Isaac Ottenheimer & Company, the jeweler and diamond man on Fifth avenue, you know—that I scrambled into a hansom and told the driver to follow my friend to Ottenheimer’s. When we pulled up there, I drew the side-curtains and watched through a quarter-inch crack. The woman came out again, looking very relieved and triumphant. And that’s the whole story, only—”

She did not finish the sentence, but looked at Durkin, who was slowly and dubiously rubbing his hands together, with the old, weary, half-careless look all gone from his studious face. He glanced back at the woman beside him, admiringly, lost himself in thought for a moment, and then laughed outright.

“You’re a dare-devil, Mame, if there ever was one!” he cried, and then suddenly grew serious once more.

III

FOUR hours later, in that shabby little oyster-house often spoken of as “The Café of Failures,” and lying less than a stone’s throw from the shabbiest corner of Washington square, Miss Mabel Chandler met by appointment a stooped and somewhat sickly-looking workman carrying a small bag of tools. This strange couple sought out a little table in one of the odorous alcoves of the oyster-house, and talked at great length and in low tones over an unexpectedly generous dinner.

“You say it’s a Brandon & Stark eight-ton vault; but can’t you give me something more definite than that to work on?” the man was asking of the girl.

“Only what I’ve told you about its position; I had to watch out for Ottenheimer every minute I was in that store.”

“I see. But while I think of it, providing we do find the stone there, do we turn it over again, or—?”

“I gave my word of honor, Jim!”

The shadow of a smile on his face died away before her unyielding solemnity.

“Oh, of course! There is a thousand pounds on it, anyway, isn’t there?”

She nodded her head in assent.

“But I think we’ve got our trouble before us, and plenty of it, before we see that thousand pounds,” he said, with a shrug.

“The time’s so short—that is the danger. As I was on the point of telling you, Ottenheimer has an expert diamond-cutter in his shops.”

“And that means he’ll have the apex off our Pear at the first chance, and, ergo, it means hurry for us. But tell me the rest.”

“Ottenheimer himself owns, I discovered, the double building his store is in. He has his basement, of course, his ground-floor show-room and store, and work-rooms, and shipping department, and all that, on the second story. Above them is a lace importer. On the top floor there is a chemical fire-apparatus agency. In the south half of the building, with the hall and stairway between, is an antique-furniture store, and above them a surgical-supply company. The third and top floors are taken up by two women photographers—their reception-room on the third floor, their operating-room, and that sort of thing, on the top floor, with no less than two skylights and a transom opening directly on the roof. I arranged for a sitting with them. That is the floor we ought to have, but the building is full. Three doors below, though, there was a top, back studio suite to let, and I’ve taken it

for a month. There we have a transom opening on the roof; I looked through, merely to see if I could hang my washing out sometimes. But barring our roof off from Ottenheimer's is an ugly iron fencing."

"Did you get a chance to notice their wiring?"

"The first thing. We can cut in and 'loop' their telephone from our back room, with thirty feet of number twelve wire."

"Then we've got to get in on that line, first thing!"

He ruminated in silence for a minute or two.

"Of course, you didn't get a glimpse of the basement, under Ottenheimer's?"

"Hardly, Jim. We shall have to leave that to the gasman!"

And they both laughed a little over the memory of a certain gasman who short-circuited a private line in the basement of the stock-exchange building and, through doing so, upset one of the heaviest cotton-brokerage businesses on Wall street.

"Did you notice any of the other wires, power circuits, and that kind of thing?"

"Yes; but there were too many of them! I know, though, that Ottenheimer's wires go south along our roof."

"Then the sooner we give a quiet ear to that gentleman's conversation, the better for us. Have you had any furniture moved in?"

"It goes this evening. By the way, though, what am I just at present?"

Durkin thought for a moment, and then suddenly remembered her incongruous love for needlework.

"You'd better be a hard-working maker of cotillon-favors, don't you think? You might have a little showcase put outside."

She pondered the matter, drumming on the table with her impatient fingers.

"But how is all this going to put us inside that eight-ton safe?"

"That's the trouble we've got to face," he laughed back at her.

"But haven't you thought of anything?"

"Yes. I've been cudgeling my brains until I feel light-headed. Nitro-glycerine I object to—it's so odiously criminal, so abominably crude, and so disgustingly noisy. And it's brain we've got to cudgel, and not safe-doors. Now, speaking as an expert, by lighting, say, a piece of sulphur, and using it as a sort of match to start combustion, I could turn on a stream of liquid oxygen and burn through that safe-steel about the same as through a pine board. But the trouble is in getting the oxygen. Or a couple of gallons of liquid air, say, poured on the top of the safe, ought to chill the steel so that one good blow from a sledge would crack it. Or by tapping an exceptionally strong power-circuit somewhere, I could fuse portions of the steel with electricity, and cut it away like putty. But all that, you see, is mechanical and coarse; and it all has its drawbacks, too."

"Then what can we do?"

"Use these thick heads of ours to advantage—think, not pound, our way in. Mame, we've got to get at that safe as Ottenheimer himself would!"

They looked at each other for a minute of unbroken silence, the one trying to follow the other's wider line of thought.

"Well, there's where our fun comes in, I suppose," said Mame, valiantly, feeling for the first time a little qualm of doubt.

Durkin, who had been plunged in thought, turned to her with a sudden change of manner.

"You're a bad lot, Mame!" he said, warmly, catching her frail hands in his own.

"I know it," she answered, wistfully, leaning passively on her elbows. "But some day I'm going to change—we're both going to change!" And she stroked his studiously bent head with her hand, in a miserably solicitous maternal sort of way, and sighed heavily once or twice, trying in vain to console herself with the question as to why a good game should be spoilt by a doubtful philosophy.

IV

ENTRENCHED in her little top-floor studio, behind a show-case of cotillon favors, Miss Cecelia Starr sat in her wicker rocker, very quietly and very contentedly, sewing. She felt that it had been an exceptionally profitable day for her.

Three hair-pins and a linen handkerchief held a watch-case receiver close over her ear, after the style of the metallic ear-bands of a central-office operator. Leading from this improvised ear-band and trailing across the floor out into her private room at the back, ran a green, cloth-covered wire. This wire connected again with an innocent-looking and ordinary desk-battery transmitter, rigged up with a lever-switch, and standing on a little table next to the wall, up which might be detected the wires that since ten o'clock that morning had tapped and bridged the general wire connecting the offices of Ottenheimer & Company with the outside world.

From time to time the members of that firm went to their telephone, little dreaming that a young lady, decorously sewing velvet scissor-cases on a studio top-floor of another building, was quietly listening to every message that passed in and out of their bustling place of business. It was a strange medley of talk, some of it incoherent, some of it dull, some of it amusing. Sometimes the busy needle was held poised, and a more interested and startled expression flitted over the shadowy violet eyes of Miss Cecelia Starr. At such times she vaguely felt that she was a disembodied spirit, listening to the hum of a far-away world, or that she was an old astrologer, gazing into some mystic and forbidden crystal. Still again as she listened, she felt like an invisible eagle, poised high in ethereal emptinesses, watching hungrily a dim and far-off sign of earthly life and movement.

Suddenly, from the street door sounded the familiar two-three ring of Durkin. This door remained open during the day, and she waited for him

to come up. She went to her own door, however, and laughed girlishly as he stepped into the room, mopping his moist forehead. There was a very alert, nervous, triumphant expression in his eyes, and, once again, the feeling swept over her that it was now only crime, and crime alone, that could stimulate into interest and still satisfy their fagged vitalities. It was their one and only intoxication, the one thing that could awaken them from their mental sloth and stir them from the shadowy valley of disillusionment.

Her quick eye had taken note of the fact that he wore a soiled blue uniform and the leather-peaked blue cap of a Consolidated Gas Company employee, and that he carried with him a brass hand-pump. He laughed a little to himself, put down his pump in one corner of the room, and allowed his fingers to stray through his mutilated Vandyke, now a short and straggly growth of sandy whiskers. Then he turned to her with an unuttered query on his face.

"I was right," she said, quietly, but hurriedly.

"I never really doubted it!"

"Ottenheimer has a private drawer in the vault. It's in that. His wife telephoned down very cautiously about it this morning. A little later, too, Ottenheimer was called up from a Brooklyn drug-store, by a Mrs. Van Gottschalck, or some such name, who said her husband was still in bed with the grip, and couldn't possibly get over until Monday. This man, you see, is Ottenheimer's diamond-cutter."

"Thank heaven! That gives us a little more time!"

"Three days, at least. But what have you done, Jim?"

"Been trying to persuade the janitor of the Ottenheimer building that I was sent to pump the water out of his gas-pipes. But he was just as sure that I wasn't. I got down in his cellar, though, and had a good look about, before I saw it wouldn't do to push the thing too far. So I insisted on going up and seeing the owner about that order. There was an inside stairway

and a queer-looking steel door I wanted to get my knuckles against. I started up there, but he hauled me back. I found out, though, that this door is made of one-inch, steel armor-plate. There's another door leading from the foot of the outer hallway into the cellar itself. But that's only covered with soft sheet-iron—more for fire than anything else. Fifteen minutes will get through that one, easily. It's the inner door that is the problem. I tried it with a knife-point—just one hard little jab. It took the end off my Rogers blade."

"But is this door the only way in?"

"Absolutely; the rear is impossible, bricked-up; and the avenue itself is a little too conspicuous. The bolts of this door, as far as I can make out, slide into heavy steel cups sunk in solid cement, and are controlled, of course, from inside. Judging from the thickness of these, and the sound of the door, it would take either a pound of soap and nitro-glycerine on the one hand, or five hours of hard drilling on the other, to get through. We'll say seven hours, altogether, to get into the building. Then comes the safe, or, rather, the vault itself. I had a casual glance at that safe, this morning, before I got these duds on—dropped in to purchase an engagement-ring, but was altogether too hard to suit. It's a ten-tonner, I believe, and about as burglar-proof as it can be made. Nothing but a gallon of guncotton would make so much as a dent in it. But, here again, explosions are not in my line. We've got to use these wits of ours. We've got to get in that safe, and we've got to get through that door! I can't risk six hours of machine-shop work down there; and I'm still too respectable to drop into safe-cracking!"

"Well, the combinations of that sort of vault, you know, aren't often advertised on the ash-barrels."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean we have got to get it by our own wits, as you say."

"The janitor, old Campbell, leaves the building about ten-fifteen every night. He's also a sort of day-watch-

man, I find. He's a pretty intelligent and trusty old fellow, absolutely unapproachable, from our standpoint. Another thing, too, the place is webbed with burglar-alarm apparatus. It would take another hour or so to get the right wires cut safely off. I hate to feel squeamish, at this time of the game—but that Ottenheimer safe does look uninviting!"

Mame walked up and down, with the little watch-case receiver and its handkerchief still crowning her heavy mass of dark hair, like a coronet, and green wires trailing behind her, like the outline of a bridal veil. She was thinking fast and desperately. Suddenly, she stopped in the midst of her pacing, and looked hard at Durkin.

"I've found it!" she said, in a feverish half-whisper. "We've got to do it!"

Durkin looked at her gloomily, still struggling with his own line of fruitless thought.

"Here, Jim, quick! Take this and listen." She placed the receiver close to his ear as she spoke. "Now, that's Ottenheimer himself at the 'phone. Can you catch his voice distinctly? Well, do you notice what kind of a voice it is—its timbre, I mean? A plaintive-toned, guttural, suave, mean, cringing sort of voice! Listen hard! He may not be at the 'phone again to-day. Is he still talking?"

"Yes, the old scoundrel! There, he's finished."

"What was it about?"

"Just kicking to some one down in Maiden Lane because Judge Hazel of the district court has overruled the board of appraisers and imposed a ten per cent. *ad valorem* duty on natural pearls coming in."

"But his voice—Jim, you have got to learn to imitate that voice!"

"And then what?"

"Then cut in, presumably from Ottenheimer's own house, and casually ask, say, Phipps, the junior salesman and head of the shipping department, just what your safe combination happens to be. It has slipped your memory, you see!"

"And Phipps, naturally, will ring up central and verify the call."

"Not at all! At the first sound from him we shall cut his wire."

"Which cuts us off, and gives us away, as soon as a special messenger can deliver a message and a lineman trace up the trouble."

"Then why cut him off at all? If that's too risky, should the worst come to the worst, we can tell central it's a case of crossed wires, bewilder her a bit, and then shut ourselves off."

"I believe you've almost got it."

"But can you get anywhere near that voice?"

"Listen, Mame, how's this?"

He drew in his chin, half laughingly, and throwing his voice into a whining yet businesslike guttural, spoke through an imaginary transmitter to an imaginary Ottenheimer.

"That would never, never do!" cried Mame, despairingly. "He's a German Jew, if you have noticed—he sounds his *w*'s like *w*'s, and not like *v*'s, but he makes his *r*'s like *w*'s."

"Oh, I have it," broke in Durkin, from a silent contemplation of his desk-phone. "We'll just release the binding-posts on our transmitter a little, and, let's say, keep the electrode-bearing a trifle slack—fix things up, I mean, so any voice will sound as tinny as a phonograph—decompose it, so to speak. Then, if necessary, we can lay it to the fact that the wires are out of order somewhere!"

"Good, but when—when can we do it?"

Durkin paced the room, with his old-time restless, animal-like stride, while Mame readjusted her receiver and restlessly took her seat in the wicker rocker once more.

"This is Friday. That leaves Saturday night the only possible night for the — er — the invasion. Then, you see, we get a whole day for a margin. First, we've got to find out exactly what time Ottenheimer himself leaves the place, and whether it's Phipps, or some one else, who closes up, and just what time he does it."

"They close at half-past five on

Saturdays. Ottenheimer has already made an engagement for to-morrow, about five, at the Waldorf, with an importer, to doctor up an invoice for the benefit of the treasury department."

"We could make that do; though, of course, any one in his office would be more likely to suspect a call from the Waldorf, being a public place. You must find out, definitely, this afternoon just who it is closes up to-morrow. Then we must get hold of some little business detail or two, to fling in at him, in case he has any suspicions."

"That shouldn't be so very difficult. Though I do wish you could get something nearer Ottenheimer's voice!"

"I'll have a rehearsal or two alone—though I guess we can muffle up that 'phone to suit our purpose. My last trouble, now, is to find out how I'm going to get through those two doors, without powder."

Again he fell to pacing the little room with his abstracted stride, silently testing contingency after contingency, examining and rejecting the full gamut of possibilities. Sometimes he stood before the woman with the receiver, staring at her with vacant and unseeing eyes; at other times, he paced between her and the window. Then he paused before the little green coils of wire that stretched across the room. He studied them with involuntary and childish movements of the head and hands. Then he suddenly stood erect, ran to the back window, and flung it open.

"My God, I've got it!" he cried, running back to where the woman still sat, listening. "I've got it!"

"How?" she asked, catching her breath.

"I've got to eat my way through what may be, for all I know, a full inch of Harveyized steel. I've got to burrow and work through it in some way, haven't I? It has to be done quickly, too. I've got to have power, strong power."

He stopped suddenly, and seemed to be working out the unmastered details in his own mind, his eyes bent on a little shelf in one corner of the room.

"Have you ever seen an electric fan? You see this shelf, up here in the corner? Well, at one time an electric fan stood there—see, here are the remnants of the wires. It stood there whirling away at three hundred revolutions a minute, and with no more power than it takes to keep an ordinary office-lamp alight. Right at the back of this house is a wire, a power-circuit, alive with more than two hundred times that voltage, with power in plenty—a little condensed Niagara of power—asking to be taken off and made use of!"

"But what use?"

"I can capture and tame and control that power, Mame. I can make it my slave and carry it along with me, almost in my pocket, on a mere thread of wire. I can make it a living, iron-eating otter, with a dozen fangs—in the shape of quarter-inch drills, gnawing and biting and eating through that armor-plate door about the same as a rat would gnaw through a wooden lath. Oh, we've got them, Mame! We've got them this time!"

"Not until we know that combination, though," qualified the colder-thoughted woman in the wicker rocker, still not quite understanding how the other had found so potent and so unexpected an ally.

V

In the paling afternoon, with a pearl-mist of fine rain thinly shrouding the city, Mame waited for Durkin impatiently with her watch open before her. As the frail steel hand, implacable as fate, sank away toward the half-hour mark, her own spirits sank with it. It was not often Durkin was late. Another ten minutes would make him forever too late. She debated within herself whether or not she should risk her own voice over the wire to Ottenheimer's office, while there was yet time, or wait it out to the last. Then she remembered, to her sudden horror, that the transmitter still stood in its perfect and normal condition, that

there could be no muffling, incompetent mechanism to disguise the tones of her voice.

She was still beating despairingly through a tangle of dubious possibilities when the reassuring two-three ring of the door-bell sounded out, through the quiet of the lonely twilight, with startling clearness. A minute later Durkin came panting into the room. He was clean-shaven, silk-hatted, immaculate, and most painfully out of breath.

"Is there time?" he gasped, putting down a heavy suit-case and peeling off his frock-coat as he spoke.

"It's twenty-one minutes after five. If Phipps is punctual, that gives you only four minutes."

By this time Durkin had the suit-case open. In another half-minute he had the casing off the transmitter. Then a deft turn or two with his screw-driver, a tentative touch or two on the electrode, and in another half-minute the casing was restored, and he was gently tapping on the diaphragm of the transmitter, with the receiver at his ear, testing the sound.

"Just a minute now, till I cool down, and get my breath. I had endless trouble getting my drill apparatus—at one time I thought I'd have to take a dentist's tooth-driller or some such thing. But I got what I wanted—that's what kept me. Anything new?"

He turned, with the receiver still at his ear, and for the first time looked at her closely. Her face seemed pale and a little weary-looking against her black street-gown, the shadowy wistfulness about her eyes seemed more marked than ever.

"Yes," she was laughing back at him, however, "something most prodigious has happened. I have an order for one dozen cotillon-favors, to be done in velvet and crimson satin, and delivered next Saturday afternoon!"

Durkin himself laughed, shortly, and faced the telephone, once more, asking her how time was.

"You haven't a second to lose."

His own face was a little paler than usual as he stood before the transmitter

while Mame, with her watch in her hand, went on saying that, if Phipps was punctual, he would be out and away in one minute's time.

Durkin took a last look round, said, under his breath, "Well, here goes!" and placed the receiver to his ear.

The next minute, the bell tinkled out briskly, authoritatively, with a metallic and dispassionate peremptoriness. For a moment, too, Mame, watching him with half-parted lips, was haunted with the sudden impression that she had lived through the scene before, that each move and sound was in some way second-hand to her inner consciousness, older than time itself, a blurred and dateless photograph on the plates of memory.

"Hello! hello! Is that you Phipps?" she heard him say, and his voice sounded thin and far away. There was a pause—it seemed an endless pause—and he repeated the query, louder. "This is Ottenheimer. Yes, something wrong with the 'phone. Don't cable Teetzel—I say, don't cable Teetzel about those canary diamonds, until you see me. Yes, Teetzel. Did you get that? Well—er—what the devil's our safe-combination? Yes; yes; Ottenheimer!"

"Slower—slower, Jim!" moaned Mame, behind him.

"Combination's slipped my mind, Phipps. Yes; after dinner; want to run down and look over the books. Louder, please; I can't hear. Yes, that's better. To the right three times, to seventy-four—back thirty—on eighty-two—back one hundred and eight—and on seven. Yes. It's the second last figure slipped me. Better close up now. Better close up, I say. All right. Good-bye."

The bell tinkled and grew still. The last minute vibration ebbed out of the transmitter's tingling diaphragm; but still neither the listening man nor woman moved. They waited, tense, expectant, tossed between doubt and hope, knowing only too well that the questioning tinkle of that little, polished, nickel bell would sound the signal of their absolute and irreparable defeat.

Second by second, a minute dragged itself away. Then another, and another, and still no call came from Ottenheimer's office for central. The woman moved a little, restlessly. The man sighed deeply. Then he slowly put down the receiver, and mopped his moist forehead and face.

"I think he's safe," half whispered Durkin, with his eyes still on the transmitter.

"He may suspect, any moment, though—when he has had time to think it over, especially."

"I rather doubt it. Our voices were nothing but broken squeaks. But, if he does ring up central, we'll have to risk it and jump in and claim a wire's crossed somewhere."

Then he repeated the strange formula: "To the right three times, to seventy-four—back thirty—on eighty-two—back one hundred and eight—and on seven. Can you get it down, Mame?"

She nodded, as she wrote it, in pencil, on a slip of paper. This he placed in his waistcoat pocket, and mopped his face once more, laughing—perhaps a little hysterically, as he felt the passing minutes drip relievingly, like the softest of balm, on his strained nerves.

"And now what?" asked Mame, sharing his relief, as she went to the window and breathed the fresh air that blew in through the low-ceilinged little room.

"Now," said Durkin, jubilantly, "now we begin our real work!" He opened his suit-case, and handed her a heavy, cylindrical, steel implement. Into one end of this odd-looking tool he slipped and clamped a slender, polished little shaft of grooved steel.

"That's what nearly lost me everything," he continued, carefully unpacking, as he spoke, a condenser, a tangent galvanometer, a pair of linesman's gloves, a Warner pocket battery-gauge, a pair of electrician's scissors and pliers, two or three coils of wire, half-a-dozen pony glass insulators and a handful or two of smaller tools.

"Here, you see, is what I set up business with," he soliloquized, as he

studied the litter they made on the floor. He looked up quickly as Mame drew her little table out from the wall and lifted the transmitter up on the empty electric-fan shelf. "Er—before I forget it," he said, absently, his eyes still on his widely-strewn apparatus, "have you got everything you want away from here?"

She had; though she hated to leave her show-case, she said. Some day she might like to take up fancy-sewing again. "But before we do another thing," she insisted, "we have got to have dinner. Breakfast this morning was our last meal, I know!"

And to his utter astonishment Durkin remembered that he was famished!

It was a hurried and humble little meal they ate together in the failing light—a meal of sandwiches washed down with bottled claret. Their thoughts, as they ate, however, were on other things, grappling with impending problems, wondering when and under what circumstances their next meal would be eaten, almost glorying in the very uncertainty of their future, tingling with the consciousness of the trial they were to undergo, of the hazard they essayed. Then Durkin, as he smoked, laid out his final plan of action, point by premeditated point.

VI

At twenty minutes to eleven, slipping off his shoes, Durkin climbed cautiously through the transom opening out on the roof. Creeping as carefully from chimney-tier to chimney-tier, he found himself face to face with a roof-fence of sharpened iron rods. He counted down this fence to the eighteenth rod, then carefully lifted on it. The lead that sealed it in the lower cross-piece, and the stone beneath that again, had been strangely fused away, and the loosened rod slid up through the top horizontal bar, very much like a miniature portcullis. Squeezing through this narrow opening, he carefully replaced the rod behind him.

With the flattened piece of steel, once used for a furnace-poker, and looking very much like a gigantic tack-drawer, he slowly and gently forced the bolt that held shut the transom on the Ottenheimer building. This he replaced, after passing through, paying out with him, as he went, two coils of rubber-coated wire, in appearance not unlike a large size of incandescent lamp-cord.

From the photographer's studio in which he found himself, nothing but a draw-bolt kept him from an outside hallway. Making sure that the building was deserted, and everything safe, he worked his way slowly down, stair by stair, to the basement. Here he made a careful study of the little tunnel of electric wires at the back of the lower hall, probing, testing, measuring, and finally, with cool deliberation, cutting every wire that in any way looked like a burglar-alarm connection, taking care to leave only the lighting circuit intact. Then, holding before him his little two-candle incandescent lamp, scarcely bigger than his thumb-nail, he groped toward the iron-covered door that divided one half of the building from the other.

Here he directed his thin shaft of light into the crack between the heavy door and its studding, and his squinting eyes made out the iron lock-bar that held him out. From his vest pocket, where they stood in a row like glimmering pencils, he took out one of the slim steel drills, adjusted it noiselessly in the drill-flange, and snapped shut his switch. There was the quick spit of a blue spark, and, of a sudden, the inanimate thing of steel throbbed and sang and quivered with mysterious life. As he glanced down at it, in its fierce revolutions, he realized that once more he had for an accomplice that old-time, silent and ever-ready assistant which for years had been a well-tested and faithful friend. The mere companionship with so familiar a force brought back to him his waning confidence.

He forced the whirling drill through the door crack and in against the bar. It ate through the soft iron as though it had been a bar of cheese. Eight

carefully placed perforations, side by side, had severed the end of the lock-shaft. He shut off the current, confidently, and swung open the heavy door. The falling piece of iron made a little tinkle of sound on the cement flooring, then all was silence again. He had at least, he told himself, captured the enemies' outposts.

Cautiously, he felt his way across the warm cellar, up the steps, and at last faced his one defiant barrier, the door of solid steel, abutted by even more solid masonry. The builders of that door had done their best to make it forbidding to men of his turn of mind. Durkin ruminated, as he felt and sounded and tested despondently over its taciturn painted surface.

He studied the hinges carefully, with his tiny lamp. They were impregnable. As he had surmised, his only way was to cut out, inch by inch, the three heavy steel shafts, or bolt-bars, which slipped and fitted into steel casings, also apparently embedded in solid masonry.

Adjusting his drill, he closed the switch once more, and, bracing the instrument's head against his breastbone, watched the slender, humming spinning shaft bite and grind and burrow its way into the slowly yielding bar. From a little pocket-can, every minute or two, he squirted kerosene in on the drill tip. The pungent smell of the scorching oil as it spread on the heated steel rose almost suffocatingly to his nostrils, in the furnace-heated warmth of the cellar, and for weeks afterward remained an indistinct and odious memory to him.

When his first hole was bored, and his little drill raced wildly through into space, like the screw of a liner on the crest of a wave, he started a second close beside the first; then a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, slowly honeycombing the thick steel with his minute excavations. Sometimes a drill would snap off short, and he would have to draw a fresh one from his stock. Sometimes it did not bite sharply, and he tried another. And still he stood drilling, directing the

power of his silent, insidious, untiring accomplice whose spirit sighed and burned itself out through the wire at his feet.

As he worked, he lost all track of time; after he had started what he knew would be the last hole, he stopped and looked at his watch, as casually as he had done often enough after a night of operating the key in a despatcher's office. To his horror, he saw that it had stopped, stunned with a natural enough electrolytic paralysis. It might not yet be twelve, or it might be four in the morning; time, from the moment he had taken off his shoes in Mabel Chandler's little back room, had been annihilated to him. He wondered, in sudden alarm, if she were still keeping up her patrol outside, up and down the block. He wondered, too, as he drove the little drill home for the last time and cautiously pried open the great, heavy door, if she had sent any signal in from the street-front, and he had missed it. He even wondered if daylight would not overtake them at their work—when his startled eyes, chancing to fall on a near-by clock-dial, saw that the hour was only twenty-five minutes to twelve!

Step by step, he crept back to the inner offices, followed by the murmurous ticking of a dozen noisy clocks declaiming his presence. From the floor in front of where the safe stood, gloomy, ominous, impregnable-looking, he lifted a seemingly innocent rubber mat. As he thought, it had been attached to a burglar-alarm apparatus. Dropping on one knee, he repeated his formula, number by number, each time listening for the tell-tale click of the wards. Then, turning the nickel lock-knob, he heard the many-barred lock chuck back into place.

The next moment, the ponderous doors were open, and Durkin's little thumb-nail electric lamp was exploring the tiers of inner compartments.

He still carried his drill with him; and, once he had found the private drawer he wanted, the softer iron of the inner fittings offered little resistance to a brutally impatient one-eighth

bit. After two minutes of feverish work, he was able to insert the point of his furnace-poker into the drawer, and firmly but gently pry it open.

The next moment his blackened and oily fingers were rummaging carelessly through a fortune or two of unset stones, through little trays of different-tinted diamonds, through crowded little cases of Ceylon pearls and Uralian emeralds. At last, in a smaller compartment, marked "I. Ottenheimer," he found the little gun-metal case, sealed up in an envelope. The case itself, however, was securely locked. Durkin hesitated for one-half second; then he forced the lid open with his screw-driver.

One look was enough. It held the Blue Pear.

He stooped and carefully brushed up the steel cuttings under his shoeless feet. As carefully, he closed the inner drawers of the safe. His hand was on the nickel lock-knob once more, to swing the ponderous outer doors shut, when a sound fell on his ears, a sound that made his very blood chill and tingle and chill again through all his tense body.

It was Mame's voice, inside the same building in which he stood, not a hundred feet away from him—her voice shrilly screaming for help.

His first mad impulse was to rush out to her, blindly. A second precautionary flash of thought kept him rooted to the spot where he stood, listening. He could hear confused, sharp voices, and the scuffling of feet. He heard the quick scream again; then guttural, angry protests. Some subliminal prompting told Durkin that scream was not one of terror, but of warning.

Snapping out his incandescent lamp, he stole cautiously forward through the row of partitioned, heavily-carpeted little offices, and, without showing himself, peered toward the shopfront. As he did so, a second involuntary thrill of apprehension sped up and down his backbone. The street door itself was open. Already halfway in through that door was a dark,

stoutly-built man. He stood struggling in the arms of a determined and desperate young woman. That woman, Durkin, could see, was Mame. And all the while she was clinging to him and holding him, she was crying lustily for help. The next moment Durkin made out the man. It was Ottenheimer himself. For some unknown reason, he hastily surmised, the diamond-merchant had intended to drop into his own office. But why, he still asked, was Mame taking such risks?

Durkin did not try to work the thing out in its minute details. Like a flash, he darted back to the open safe. He swung the big doors to, locked them, caught up his drill and loose strands of wire, and then backed quickly out through the steel door, securing it with a deft twist or two of a piece of "No. 12." The outer cellar door he as quickly closed after him.

Then he flew up-stairs, two steps at a time, rebolted the photographer's hall-door, replaced the transom as he swung up through it, and as hurriedly refitted the loose iron bar in the roof-fencing.

Three minutes later, a well-dressed gentleman, wearing a silk hat and carrying a large leather suit-case, stopped, with a not unnatural curiosity, on his way up Fifth avenue to inquire the meaning of an excited little crowd that clustered about two policemen and a woman in the doorway of Isaac Ottenheimer & Company.

He drew up, casually enough, and listened while a short, stout, and very indignant man spluttered and gesticulated and angrily demanded how any one should dare to stop him from going into his own store. He was the owner of the place—there was his own watchman to identify him.

The young woman, who chanced to be veiled, explained in her well-modulated, rich contralto voice that the hour had seemed so unusual, the store had looked so dark inside, even the burglar-alarm, she stubbornly insisted, had rung so loudly, that, naturally, it had made her suspicious.

She was sorry if it was a mistake. But now the officers were there they could attend to it—if some one would kindly call a carriage for her.

The sergeant at her elbow agreed with her, and stopping an empty motor-cab on its way up the Avenue, turned back to the enraged owner of the store, and solicitously advised him to go home and cool down.

"You hold that woman!" demanded Ottenheimer, husky with rage. "You hold that woman, till I examine these premises!"

The young woman, obviously, and also quite naturally, objected to being held. There was a moment of puzzled silence, and then a murmur of disapproval from the crowd, for about the carefully gloved girl in the black street-gown and plumed hat clung that nameless touch of birth and bearing which marked her as a person who would be more at home in a brougham than in a wind-swept doorway.

"The lady, of course, will wait!" quietly but deliberately suggested the silk-hatted man with the suit-case, looking casually in over the circling crowd of heads.

The sergeant turned, sharply, glaring out his sudden irritability.

"Now, who asked you to butt in on this?" he demanded, as he impatiently elbowed the pressing crowd further out into a wider circle.

"I merely suggested that the lady

wait!" repeated the man in the silk hat, as imperturbed as before.

"Of course, officer, I shall wait, willingly," said the girl, hurriedly, in her low-noted, rich contralto. She drew her skirts about her timidly, merely asking the shop-owner to make his search as quickly as possible.

Ottenheimer and the dubious-minded sergeant disappeared into the gloom of the midnight store. As the whole floor flowered into sudden electric luminousness, Durkin thanked his stars that he had had sense enough to leave the lighting wires intact.

"Everything's all right; you may go, miss," said the sergeant, two minutes later. "I guess old Isaac's had an early nightmare!" And the dispersing crowd laughed sympathetically.

The woman stepped into the motor-cab and turned toward Broadway. Safely round the corner, she picked up the waiting Durkin.

"That was a close one—but we win!" he murmured, jubilantly.

The woman at his side, for some vague reason, could not share in his joy. Intuitively, in that moment of exhaustion, she felt that their triumph, at the most, was a mere conspiracy of indifference on the part of a timeless and relentless destiny. And in the darkness of the carriage she put her ineffectual arms about Durkin, passionately, as though such momentary guardianship might shield him for all time to come.

HAD TO COME ACROSS

GUEST—Waiter, bring me a tiptop dinner. You know what that means, don't you?

WAITER—Yes, sah. It's one that you top off with a tip.

BURSLEY—He claims to be related to you, and says he can prove it.

FLOYD—The man's a fool.

"That may be a mere coincidence."

THE WAY OF IT

SHE kept his flowers, and in a book
 She pressed them, with a written date
 To show him, ere his leave he took,
 That *she* had felt, at any rate.

He knew her tears were falling, while
 He ground his teeth, and turned away,
 Lifting his hat, with one hard smile—
 Even "good-bye" he did not say.

No date he wrote, he kept no flower,
 He made no sign of heart's regret.
 She thought of him—perhaps an hour—
 He still is trying to forget!

MADLINE BRIDGES.



NOT FAVORABLY IMPRESSED

GRACE—Well, what do you think of Mr. Newman?
 FLORENCE—I don't like the way he slings slang.
 "How do you think it should be slung?"



HE WASN'T IN IT

SHE—I thought you were going to marry her.
 HE—That was my intention, but I was out-talked.
 "How's that?"
 "The other fellow had money."



DESERVED GREAT CREDIT

HE—I knew a few things before I entered society.
 SHE—Did you? Then you deserve great credit, for your success in concealing them has been phenomenal.

AN OLD MAID'S IDYLL

By Nora Alexander

MISS PRISCILLA MORTIMER was tending her roses. When she did this, she habitually looked ten years younger than usual, partly because she loved them, partly because the exertion brought a tinge of pink into her fading cheeks, and loosened little softening tendrils of hair about the outlines of her face.

Possibly it was some vague, subconscious recognition of her "possibilities" that attracted the attention of the squire's son as he sauntered moodily one morning through the little west-country village. He paused, and leaned over the gate.

"Good morning, Miss Priscilla," he said.

"Good morning, Mr. Ralph," she returned, with a touch of old-maidenly primness. For, although Miss Priscilla was but thirty-five, she lacked the two great essentials for the preservation of youth: she had lived much alone, and she had never loved. Her life, except for her roses, was empty.

"Very hot." The squire's son had never boasted of originality.

"Very warm," admitted Miss Priscilla, demurely.

But there was a suggestion of coolness about the slim, lilac-gowned figure, of restful stillness about the old-world garden, that, perhaps in contrast to the stormy scene in which he had just taken part, appeared suddenly desirable to the young man.

"It looks delightfully cool in your rose arbor," he said, deliberately. So palpable a hint could scarcely be ignored, but since no male being, except the curate—who scarcely counted—had ever entered that sanctum, it

was with a perceptible flutter that Miss Priscilla replied:

"You're very welcome, Mr. Ralph."

But, with the unconcern and unobservance of youth, the squire's son overlooked this detail, as he lifted the latch of the little green gate, and sauntered down the pebbled path with its bordering hollyhocks.

"May I smoke?" he asked, presently.

"It's good for the roses, you know."

Miss Priscilla smiled, and the pink in her cheeks deepened.

"I should be most grateful. Would you mind moving to the other side?"

Ralph Holmwood shifted his long limbs obediently, while he lighted a cigar.

"Thank you," said Miss Priscilla.

"Last year that Malmaison had green-fly, and I had a terrible business smoking it out—by lighting tobacco under a pot, you know," she added, vaguely, on the defensive.

He nodded, and smoked on in silence. He had no desire to talk, nor, apparently, moving among her roses, had Miss Priscilla—a fact concerning womankind which appeared to him in the light of a revelation.

"How's the colonel?" she inquired, perfunctorily, when at last he rose to go.

"Raging," returned his son, with laconic undutifulness, "like a bull at a fair."

She looked up, startled. It was so odd to hear the squire, with his dignified aloofness, spoken of in this coolly intimate fashion. Somehow, it gave her a vague sense of comradeship with the blond, devil-may-care young man at her side, and the suspicion of

a smile crept into her gray eyes. But she checked it severely as, perhaps half unconsciously, she checked most natural impulses. It is a habit of the lonely.

"You must have been very—" she began, and hesitated.

"Naughty," prompted her visitor, genially.

Miss Priscilla pursed up her lips. "Of course, it's not for me to say," she replied, with a relapse into her old-maidenly primness.

Ralph Holmwood surveyed her for a moment, with all the critical candor of youth. Then he threw away his cigar.

"Perhaps I had better come again?" he suggested, abruptly, his blue eyes twinkling. "I am not returning to town just yet, and—it will save you further trouble with the tobacco and the flower-pot, you know."

There was a pause.

"Yes, that is quite true," admitted Miss Priscilla, at last.

And that was how it all began.

II

RALPH HOLMWOOD swung down the hollyhock-bordered path with an easy air of something like proprietorship. Many months had slipped away, and during that time he had acquired something beyond the right to suffocate the too-obtrusive greenfly with expensive cigars. Just what he had acquired, or wished to acquire, was a matter for heated debate among the villagers. Also, what Miss Priscilla "meant by it," was another question calling, not so much for debate, as for unqualified disapproval. For a person, and that person a woman, to be, as Mrs. Symons, the village oracle, expressed it, "a-growin' back'ards," was obviously flying in the face of Providence, and it was an undeniable fact that, in some mysterious way, Miss Priscilla Mortimer was renewing her youth. It was not only that the tendrils of soft brown hair had ceased to be severely confined, or that her

gowns had acquired a certain added daintiness and charm; it was the self-evident fact that her face had grown less thin, her eyes brighter and the curve of her lips more flexible. There were other and subtler changes, but of these the villagers took no note. The explanation was, in reality, simple enough. She had been looking at life through the eyes of youth—generous-hearted, impulsive, sympathetic youth—and the reflection of youth's glory had fallen upon her. It was, however, but a reflection, and she knew it. Therein lay at once her wisdom and her sorrow, and the inalienable pathos of love.

Meantime, beneath the gorgeous July sunshine, Ralph Holmwood stood watching her in silence. There was a touch of gravity about him to-day, a lack of that light-hearted spontaneity which was his most marked characteristic.

"How you love those roses of yours!" he broke out, suddenly.

"One must love something," said Miss Priscilla, with a hint almost of apology in her voice, "and—I never cared for cats."

He looked at her, long and thoughtfully. Miss Priscilla grew pink.

"Why cats?" he wondered. Suddenly, his brows contracted, and he took a step toward her.

"I wish you wouldn't talk nonsense," he said.

She laughed—such a soft, happy little laugh, and straightway looked younger than ever.

"I am nearly old enough to be your mother."

"Rubbish!" he answered, shortly.

"Well, an elder sister."

"Nonsense!"

Miss Priscilla laughed again.

"At any rate," she began, "I am old enough to give you some very excellent advice, if——"

But the young man moved abruptly away toward the rose arbor. "Come," he called, presently.

And, as she came, he kissed one of her favorite Malmaison roses, and held it out to her.

"I don't want you in either of those capacities," he said. "I want you for my wife, Priscilla."

He took her slim white hands in his, and looked down into her eyes. And, for one long moment, he saw in them all the light and the glory and the fire of youth. For there was given to Miss Priscilla only that one moment in which to crush the emotion of a lifetime. The next, her eyelids fell, and, drawing away her hands, she stooped and picked a spray of the little purple flowers growing at her feet.

"They call it 'lad's love,'" she said, very gently, placing it in his open palm.

He drew back, stung.

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you see?" she whispered, and her voice was low and stricken, though steady. "You have the gift of the gods, and I—am old."

"But I love you," he pleaded, "and love, my Priscilla, knows no laws."

She shook her head.

"Not at first, perhaps," she answered, with the paradise-closing wisdom of her age, "but afterward——"

She shrank from finishing the sentence.

Yet her eyes, as she watched him by-and-bye go down the sunlit path, were not altogether sad. She was learning the greatest of all lessons—that fullness of life comes only with sorrow.

III

MISS PRISCILLA was out, the little maid informed him, and Ralph, with a muttered, "All right, I'll wait," brushed past her, and entered the cozy, fire-lit room. And there was that in his face and bearing which caused even slow-witted *Jemima Ann* to follow his progress open-mouthed.

When Miss Priscilla found him, an hour later, it was with his face buried in the curve of his elbow as he leaned forward on the table, and the womanhood in her rushed out to him in a flood that swept all barriers before it.

"Ralph! Ralph!" she cried, remembering nothing but his great need, "let me help you! Ah! let me help you!"

He lifted his haggard young face.

"You can't," he said, dully, his horizon bounded by his own pain, and seeing nothing of hers, the pain of a great, helpless love. Yet, a moment later, he added, in his boyish way:

"But you're a brick."

"Let me be one really," she pleaded.

He pulled himself together, and sat straight up in his chair.

"I am going away—for ever. I wonder," regarding her with hard young eyes, "I wonder what you would say if you knew all."

"All what?" she asked.

"My manifold sins and wickednesses."

She looked at him. Hitherto, she had held him by all that was best in him, by the chivalrous, generous-hearted, simple side of his nature and his youth. Now, in some dim way, she knew this to be gone, overlaid, crushed by some tragedy of evil. And her simple, childlike soul shrank from the knowledge of that other side of him. Then her heart cried out, "Tell me—tell me all!"

She did not know it was the last, despairing cry of womanhood, the cry that bids one keep a hold upon the loved one, even if it be but by his vices. For Priscilla Mortimer loved Ralph Holmwood as it is only given to those who have known long loneliness of soul to love the young. Coming old to the fount, our thirst is the greater, and we drink the deeper; but we grow the stronger. This was one of the truths that Miss Priscilla had learned in these days of her awakening to life.

There was much in his enlightenment that left her unenlightened still, so remote from the world, and the ill that is in it, had the path of her existence wound. But out of that broken, incoherent confession, she gleaned the one dominant fact—he had a debt of honor that he could not meet, and his father had disinherited him.

For a moment, when he had ceased speaking, she stood quite still beside

his chair, the light of a great joy in her eyes. Then she said, simply:

"You shall have the money—in a week, if that will be soon enough."

He stared at her.

"But—but—" he began, blankly, "I thought you were— How can you lend me three thousand pounds? And—and—" his face fell swiftly back into despair—"I couldn't repay it, not—"

"Don't hurt me like that," she said. "But, if it will comfort you, then we'll agree that if your father should repent, which he certainly will do, you shall repay me when you come into your own."

So Ralph Holmwood went out into the world, and Miss Priscilla remained behind, alone.

IV

WHEN, after an absence of twenty years, Ralph Holmwood returned home to claim his own, he vaguely expected that the rose garden, and, more important still, its owner, would have remained unchanged. He himself felt much the same, and, indeed, as he passed through the little, sunshiny village to-day, tall, erect, his handsome blond head held as high as of yore, and bearing his two-and-forty years with a singular lightness, there was much in him to remind one of the youth of two-and-twenty.

But suddenly, with a quick exclamation of dismay, he pulled himself up and stood very still, while memories crowded thick and fast, and the chill of remorse fell upon him. For the rose garden was a rose garden no longer, only a tangle of weeds, grass-grown and moss-covered. Had she left? Was that the explanation? Or was she—?

But at that moment the French windows opened, and she stepped out into the sunshine—a tall, angular figure, poorly clad in an ill-cut gown, with features thinned and sharpened, and eyes that had grown dim. She sat down in what had once been the rose arbor, and, unfolding the heavy piece of work she carried, commenced to stitch at the elaborate embroideries—to stitch in

that set, mechanical, ceaseless way that tells its own tale even to the most casual observer.

And, in a flash, Ralph Holmwood understood; and the knowledge sent him swiftly back to the stately pile of buildings he called "home," with a cheque in his breast-pocket, that seemed to lie like a patch of flame across his heart.

She had given him her all, and he—oh, God! was there no way out? Then his mind went back to a scene in the rose arbor twenty years ago. What was it she had said? "Not at first, perhaps, but afterward—" She had shrunk, he remembered, from finishing the sentence, from picturing the reality that lay before them now—now that he was still young, and she—

But, because he was indeed the same lad who had bidden her good-bye those twenty years ago, that swiftly-born knowledge sent him back to her before another sun had set. And, as he stepped into the little, flowerless sitting-room, the sense of its emptiness and bareness smote upon him with so keen and poignant a distress that Miss Priscilla divined in an instant that her secret was hers no longer. A just perceptible quiver passed over her face. Then she smiled—the smile of a woman who has learned the secret of life.

"Priscilla," he said, with grave directness, "I asked you a question twenty years ago. I have come to ask it again to-day."

The old, worn hands, folded on the shabby alpaca gown, trembled.

"Thank God!" she whispered.

He laid his strong brown ones upon them. "Thank you, Priscilla," he said, very gently.

Her hands lay still beneath his, but she lifted her eyes, those toil-dimmed eyes.

"I meant," she explained, simply, "that you're the same lad to-day as you were twenty years ago. It's what I've craved so to be sure of—to know that the good was the real thing, and the other—only a phase. It's so long, you see, since your letters ceased to come."

"Dearest of women," and his voice, in face of the unspoken thing beneath her words, had lost its steadiness, "dearest of women, you will let me—try to make up—a little?"

The warm glow about her heart faded as she drew away her hand.

"Twenty years ago," she said, "it was a lad's love. To-day, it is man's pity. Dear, I am richer for both, though I—can take—neither."

He sprang to his feet in an access of helpless remorse.

"But what can I do?" he cried. "Priscilla, think what I did—" And his eyes went swiftly out to the deserted garden.

"You emptied my life of roses—yes," she admitted with infinite gentleness, "but you filled it with love—*mother* love."

And, with the lie on her lips, she smiled up at him bravely; and, oh, it is hard to be brave when one is old and tired! Then she gave him the balm he needed.

"And you shall fill it with roses again now, if you will. So I shall be doubly rich."

But afterward, when he had gone, she wept the slow, heavy tears of lonely old age. Then she crept out to the little patch of garden that alone was tended—the patch where the lad's love grew.



IN MEMORY'S GARDEN

THERE is a garden in the twilight lands
Of Memory, where troops of butterflies
Flutter adown the cypress paths, and bands
Of flowers mysterious droop their drowsy eyes.

There, through the silken hush, come footfalls faint
And hurried through the vague parterre; and sighs
Whispering of rapture or of sweet complaint,
Like ceaseless parle of bees and butterflies.

Here, by one lonely pathway, steal I soon,
To find the flowerings of the old delight
Our hearts together knew, when lol the moon
Turns all the cypress alleys into white.

THOMAS WALSH.



LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

THE HUSBAND—My dear, I am fool enough to think that I could sit down and write a popular novel.

THE WIFE—Oh, cheer up! You may be fool enough to think so, Archibald, but you are not fool enough to do it.

IN APRIL

WHY, bless me! it's raining again!
 So glad that I brought an umbrella!
 I'm a sight—wet and muddy—but, then,
 I think I'll look in on Marcella.

So glad that I brought an umbrella!
 Whew! now it is coming in sheets.
 I think I'll look in on Marcella,
 Her Tuesdays are genuine treats!

Whew! now it *is* coming in sheets!
 Five minutes ago it was sunny.
 Her Tuesdays are genuine treats—
 Marcella! Nice girl—and some money.

Five minutes ago it was sunny!
 Yes, April's capricious, I know.
 Marcella! Nice girl—and some money.
 The house is the fourth in the row.

Yes, April's capricious, I know.
 The rain's stopped, the ghostly fog thickens.
 The house is the fourth in the row. . . .
 Not home, and not Tuesday? The dickens!

The rain's stopped, the ghostly fog thickens.
 A cab? There's not one in a mile!
 Not *home*, and not *Tuesday*! The dickens!
 Coming out wasn't half worth my while.

A cab? There's not one in a mile!
 I'll walk—to the club and play billiards.
 Coming out wasn't half worth my while.
 'D give cents if I'd not stopped at Hilliard's.

I'll walk to the club, and play billiards.
 Perhaps it will clear by-and-bye.
 'D give cents if I'd not stopped at Hilliard's.
 By Jove! there's a glimpse of blue sky.

Perhaps it will clear by-and-bye.
 I'll whistle—it's better than whining.
 By Jove! there's a glimpse of blue sky;
 The sun will be presently shining.

I'll whistle—it's better than whining.
 I'm a sight—wet and muddy—but then
 The sun will be presently shining—
 Why, bless me! it's *raining* again!

EDWARD W. BARNARD.

THE GENEROSITY OF JOHN THOMKINS

By Elizabeth Duer

I HAD no especial hatred for John Thomkins when I left him, but I am a fastidious person, and I simply could not stand him another moment.

He made his money in leaf-lard, and my friends had persuaded me to go into a matrimonial copartnership with him for the purpose of showing him how to live up to his bank-account. I was well connected, poor, and twenty-four—old enough, one would think, to know what I was undertaking. But, all the same, I did not; and the hideousness of being married to a man I did not love, whose ways made life one long irritation, nearly drove me insane. At the end of twelve months I ran away, taking nothing with me except my clothes and such jewels as I had before he married me. And I left a note to say that he need not look for me, that I preferred to support myself, and that he could get a divorce on the ground of desertion.

There was no man in the case, and there never will be. I despise the whole sex except the man in the moon, whose heart is extinct and whose surface is polished. John's attributes were otherwise.

In these days, when the best is none too good for everybody, the question of self-support is narrowed down to something you can do well, and, as a general thing, the accomplishments of women of the upper classes fall short of the standard of excellence. I could sing a little, play a little, speak French and German—with an accent neither Parisian nor Hanoverian—and administer a house with judgment.

"Be a visiting housekeeper," said

my cousin, Mrs. Brown, with whom I had taken temporary refuge in New York.

"I could not control metropolitan servants," I said, thinking of the trials I had had, even in Chicago.

"Be companion to an invalid," said Bessie Brown, and her voice said more. It said, "Be anything, rather than worry me."

I was unpacking my trunks, and the trays were spread out on the floor. Bessie had not offered the services of her maid.

"How well you pack," she said, patronizingly.

"I do," I responded, and sprang to my feet, tense with sudden resolution.

"I'll be a packer!" I exclaimed.

"A very good idea," she said, with relief. "Don't take anything more out of your trunks, for Ferdinand"—Ferdinand is Mr. Brown—"has a pull with the management of the Waldegrave, and could get you there on trial, even if they should have such a person already."

"I couldn't take the bread out of another woman's mouth," I began, tremulously, but she cut me short.

"You will never do anything, if you fold your hands in my spare bedroom."

When I entertained Bessie in Chicago before my father died, at the time of the Exposition, I didn't make her feel that she was occupying my only spare room, though she did stay twice as long as the time I had named, but, sometimes I think the Western heart is larger than the Eastern.

Bessie has practical brains, and she secured the place she promised; she also advised me how to make the most

of my advantages, which were, after all, only a certain prettiness in manners and appearance and the Ferdinand Brown backing.

That particular hotel is always full of women from all parts of this continent, who consider a fortnight in New York at the Waldegrave equal to a social education—with the added zest of dazzling the home circle on their return with a brand-new outfit of clothes and cosmetics.

"You must wear your rings," said Bessie, "and keep your hands in order, and do your hair in the latest style, and dress well. Then you must pack with sachets of your own particular perfume, and impress your patronesses with the especial *cachet* it gives to their toilettes. And you must work up a commission business with trunk people, and dressmakers and *corsetières*—indeed, with all such tradespeople—and you must excite the desire of your ladies for endless things at the last moment, to be forwarded C. O. D., so that you will get your commission without risk. Praise the hotel while you pack; declare you have seen all the well-known women of fashion lunching there that very day, and that Mrs. Blank—choose any grand name—was wearing the duplicate of the costume you are putting in the trunk. The success of the hotel depends upon the strangers who patronize it, and their coming depends upon the fashion of New York."

"Am I to live in the hotel?" I asked, with some depression. Her sketch of the astuteness necessary to success in my occupation, bewildered me.

"Of course not!" she snapped. "How could you afford to pay for a room in the Waldegrave? Take a hall-bedroom, with board somewhere in the neighborhood, and I don't mind your coming here to luncheon occasionally, when I'm alone."

When you set out to earn your bread, it is not worth while to have feelings. I could bear Bessie's brutality better than John Thomkins's affectionateness.

All this happened three years ago,

and this December sees me with a Business, deserving that initial capital B, and money in the bank. I am broker for two dressmakers, a hairdresser, a shoemaker, a trunk firm—to say nothing of half the great shops; purveyor of fallals and adviser in general to the ambitious daughters of all the states in the Union who visit the Waldegrave, in order to add the glamour of style to the framework of woman.

It was two weeks before Christmas, and a busy day. I had two ladies to pack for besides some errands in the shops, and the thermometer stood at ten degrees, which paralyzes the ambition. As I dressed in the early morning, I remembered it was my birthday. I was twenty-eight. When I was twenty-five, just before I ran away, John gave me a diamond pendant.

"Here, Margaret," he said, "I know you like pretty things, though you don't like me. It is a pity we can't hit it off better, old girl!"

Poor John! I thought of his present to-day, with no one to care how my birthdays went and came. He never bore resentment, and he deserved a kind wife in his own class of life. I was not in his class, and could not be kind to him; the kinder he was to me, the more he revolted me.

My order-book at the Waldegrave required my services at one of the most luxurious suites of rooms on the fourth floor. The lady whose trunks I was to pack was a Madame de Thompkins.

I knocked at the door of the sitting-room, and it was opened by the lady herself.

She was squarely built, with a waist so fashionably prolonged that it invaded her nether person almost to the knees. She had yellow hair, waved and fluffed all over her head, flaring light eyes, a short nose, a hard mouth, tinted scarlet, and a complexion shading to lilac.

She looked at me, inquiringly; perhaps she thought I was a guest at the hotel and had mistaken my room, for

I was without coat or hat, having left them with my good friend the house-keeper, and was ready to go to work. My clothes were impressive by intention.

"I'm the packer," I announced.

"Oh! are you?" she responded, with a short laugh. "I mistook you for a society swell. Your clothes are so smart that I am afraid you won't think I have anything worth packing." Her voice was even commoner than her words, but I was familiar with the genus, and knew how to keep my temper.

"I trust you do not think I am dressed above my occupation," I said, sweetly. "I must explain that I always wear my freshest gown when I am to handle the beautiful frocks of the ladies of the Waldegrave."

She looked complacent, almost amiable, as she took some keys from the davenport, and unlocked a bedroom door which opened on the right into the sitting-room.

"Come in here," she said, preceding me, and, fitting her keys into the various drawers and doors of the wardrobes and dressing-table, she threw everything open to my inspection.

It was indeed a scene of confusion. Three large, empty trunks stood against the wall, the bed was piled high with finery, and dressmakers' boxes were lying all over the floor.

Madame de Thompkins murmured something about my getting to work while she collected a few more things from her sleeping-room on the other side of the apartment.

"I didn't bring no maid," she said, apologetically.

She was gone perhaps fifteen minutes, and, when she reappeared, she was a moving heap of luxury and dirt. A magnificent light-blue opera-cloak hung on her arm over a bedraggled petticoat; an old, greasy, flannel dressing-gown was crushing what the milliners call a *matinée* of white lace and ribbons. They were all to be packed.

I had already sent to her rooms my leather case containing the necessities for my work, such as tissue-

paper, ribbons, scissors, pins, tacks, perfume and sachets, and, opening it, I gave her my printed schedule of prices, for I did not wish her to escape again until we had come to an agreement.

"You will please notice," I said, "that packing with violet oriza is five dollars extra."

"I am very particular about my perfumes," she answered; "I can't abide musky things."

"Then I shall do your packing in my very best style," I concluded, "just as I did it last week for the Duchess of Midgeland."

"I'll have it done first-class or not at all," she declared, with a blaze of her light eyes. "I guess there ain't many ladies in this hotel, or out of it, either, who can better afford to pay for their comfort than I can."

"I hope I shall give satisfaction," I began, "and that when you get home to——"

"Chicago," she supplied.

"—you will find everything in perfect order," I managed to conclude, for the name De Thompkins, taken in conjunction with Chicago, made my heart beat a little tattoo.

But I dismissed the suspicion with disdain. I gave John Thomkins credit for better taste; having known me, he could never decline to such a depth of vulgarity. And yet——!

While these thoughts were whirling through my brain, I was making perfunctory conversation in the familiar jargon of my profession.

"I try to simplify things for my ladies, by pinning in the top of each trunk a complete list of its contents, tray by tray. Do you happen to have any choice as to which trunk your jewel-cases go in? You seem to have a great number."

At this allusion to her treasures she made a hurried stride to the dressing-table, and then stopped, as if ashamed. While she stood irresolute, her eyes fell upon my leather case, and that seemed to confirm her sudden distrust of me. She looked upon it evidently as a cache for secreted plunder.

"You needn't pack my jewelry at all," she answered. "I always carry the stones in a chamois bag in my corsets, and the empty cases can go in this trunk. I'll just take them into the next room with me now. I hope you haven't got any of your things mixed with mine," she continued, once more glancing at my valise.

She was busy piling her jewels, with their cases, into a bandbox. I was so outraged at her insinuations that I could have beaten her, but I remembered that women, quite as respectable in appearance as I, had been guilty of crimes, so I held my peace.

There was a knock at the outer door, and Madame de Thompkins told me to go out and see what was wanted. I was not to be left alone with her jewels a second time! A hall-boy stood there with a card on a tray, and I took it from him, and carried it to my employer. I couldn't help seeing the name; it was Mr. Isador Levy.

Almost before she had read it, she went ghastly pale, and set the bandbox on the bureau so as to leave her hands free to tear the card in small pieces.

"Say I am not in the hotel," she gasped, "or, better still, say I have gone back to Chicago!" As I turned, I heard her mutter: "The brazen cheek of that man!"

He must have been waiting just outside in the passage, for before I got near enough to the boy to deliver my message, that liveried menial was pushed aside, and Mr. Isador Levy boldly advanced into the room.

A very striking-looking person he was! He had a pink-and-white complexion, a short beard and mustache that ran up his cheeks and joined his hair, which curled in a poodle crop over his head. One eye roved, but the other maintained its position close to the nose. His dress was florid in style, and he held his shoulders squared and slightly raised. His hat and stick lent grace to his attitudes.

The intrusion on his part was so unexpected that Madame de Thompkins had no time to conceal herself, but stood plainly visible through the open door.

He acknowledged my presence by bringing his heels together in a ceremonious bow, and then addressed her by slightly raising his voice.

"I heard you speak, my vriend," he said, "and I congratulate myself to catch you on the wing."

Madame de Thompkins evidently resigned herself to the inevitable, for she came into the drawing-room, carrying the bandbox in her arms, and dismissed me with a nod of her head in the direction of my work.

I was passing as quickly as I could into the bedroom, when I was nearly knocked flat by a blow from the door which Madame de Thompkins had slammed behind me by the simple expedient of a backward kick. It caught on the tail of my dress and failed to latch, and I was so irritated by her bad manners that I left it for her to attend to. If she and Mr. Levy desired privacy, they could shut the door for themselves.

Their voices reached me quite plainly.

"How dare you come here?" she asked, with passion. "If Thompkins found you here, there would be an end of everything."

"He wouldn't recognize me," was the answer. "He only saw me once in his life—the day he married you, and I stepped forward to congratulate you, and you fainted."

He laughed a chuckling laugh at the remembrance.

Her voice became more agitated.

"Oh, go!" she said, "or I'll faint again. I'm no hand at a bluff."

"Catch you betraying your interests," he sneered. "If your husband comes in, you say I am a pill-collector for Fichtenberg," and he picked up an unpaid bill from that celebrated milliner, which lay open on the table.

I must admit that my conduct admits of no excuse, for I deliberately walked to the door and listened; for, having allowed the idea to enter my brain that the woman was John's wife, the whole thing became a tragedy to me, and the detective spirit, which lurks in us all, overwhelmed my sense of honor.

"Don't waste time," she urged. "What do you want? I gave you every cent I dared last Saturday at the *matinée*. I tell you, Thompkins is awful close with ready money."

"That's pad for you, my dear," he said, with real sympathy, "but I guess you find me a thousand tollars all the same, before I leave you."

"I wish you were dead!" she groaned, stamping her foot, "as dead as I thought you were when I married him!"

"It was a goot pizness for me!" he laughed. "Come now, a thousand tollars isn't much to pay to escape a charge of pigamy. Two huspands comes high, my dear!"

I did not dare stay idle any longer. If Madame de Thompkins should get rid of her tormentor and come in to see how her packing was getting on, she would have reason to distrust me, so for five minutes I worked with steam-power energy, and then went back to my eavesdropping. Some progress had been made in the blackmailing drama.

Madame de Thompkins was speaking in a snuffing tone.

"I won't give you those emeralds! I tell you I ain't had them but two weeks, and Thompkins would miss them right off. He always insures the jewlery when we travel."

"That's all right," he acquiesced. "The Valgrave is just the blace to lose emeralds. You go home to-morrow, comfortable with your husband, and leave the bolice to search. What you pet they von't vind them?"

In all my life I had never been so close to rascality. I tried to tell myself that it was none of my business, but the vague fancy that this woman might be my successor in John's affections gave a vital interest to the occurrence that fairly unnerved me.

In the meanwhile, Levy was saying good-bye in tones of oily satisfaction, and promising his unhappy victim indemnity till—the next time! This last conclusion to his sentence moved him to a burst of merriment.

I had to think quickly if anything

were to be done before his escape. Suppose I dashed in and denounced them, what could I prove? Their word was as good as mine in denying what I had overheard; and in regard to the emeralds, Madame de Thompkins had the right to give away her own property. An ugly legal phrase about "compounding a felony" gave me a cold shiver, but I did not quite know what it meant, and I did know that it would be bad for my business to mix my name with scandals. That was not the notoriety the Waldegrave desired. So selfishness prevailed, and I did nothing.

For ten or fifteen minutes after Mr. Levy's departure there was absolute quiet in the next room; then I heard a rustling, then the snap of a box, and then a deep sigh. Evidently Madame de Thompkins was putting the case of her emeralds deep down in the bandbox, where its rifled emptiness would not challenge immediate notice.

It often happens that those willing slaves, the motor nerves, do their oft-repeated task with greater mechanical precision when detached from the guiding spirit of conscious effort. My hands were working with no guidance from my brain. That organ was absorbed in a tumult of curiosity and horror.

At the end of half an hour, Madame de Thompkins came to see how I was progressing. She had been crying, for her eyelids were fiery red and her complexion melted to the semblance of strawberry ice-cream. With perfect unconcern for my opinion, she proceeded to wash her face and make herself up anew. She had a most elaborate outfit of paint and pencils, and, by the time she had finished, no trace of tears remained.

At this juncture, the door of the sitting-room opened once more, and a man's voice called:

"Viola!"

Madame de Thompkins caught her breath and then, with an effort, answered, "I am coming," and passed into the next room.

This time she made no attempt to

shut the door, and I sank on my knees before a trunk, for I was incapable of standing. My worst fears were confirmed—the voice was that of John Thomkins!

I am never quick-witted—judgment is a slow process with me. If I could not think clearly of my responsibility in this imbroglio when I only suspected that John was a dupe, how much harder it was to determine my line of conduct when possibility became certainty!

Here was poor blundering old John married to a Jezebel who had already a scoundrel of a husband, and through greed and fear respectively the pair were engaged in robbing him, to say nothing of forcing upon him the rôle of bigamist. On the other hand, it was an ungracious task to be the means of destroying his wedded happiness a second time. If he liked this "tinted Venus," he would hate me for opening his eyes to her misdeeds. I could see that she was much more in his style than I ever could have been. There was a buxom exuberance of figure and a flashy taste in dress that must have appealed to his rococo fancy. How his jewels palpitated on her bosom and stiffened her stumpy fingers to the knuckles! How they nestled under her double chin, and punctured the fat lobes of her ears! If she behaved herself with any kind of decency, he would never see cruelty in that tigerish mouth, or wild temper in her light eyes; his imperturbable good humor protected him from nearly everything but deception.

While I hesitated, I stole a look over my shoulder to see how the years had treated John, and instantly perceived that he had changed. He had grown thinner and older; his reddish hair was well sprinkled with white, and even the waggish expression of his turned-up nose could not disguise a look of patient unhappiness on his commonplace features.

"She is a beast to him!" I exclaimed, mentally. "I'll go in at once and denounce her!"

And then I checked myself, for John began to speak.

"Say, Viola!"—John's remarks were always introduced by the word "say"—"our train leaves to-morrow morning at eight, so you must fix up your affairs to-day. How much money do you want for your bills? I'm going to get a cheque cashed in the office."

"Let me alone," she said, crossly. "You are always fuming about money. Can't the bills follow us to Chicago?"

"You will pay before you leave New York," he said, doggedly. "I propose to know where I stand."

"One would think you had to count the pennies!" she retorted. "I'm tired of having my bills pried into and money doled out as if I were a child. I want a fixed income from you, and, what's more, I mean to have it!"

Her voice was threatening.

John was a just man as well as an amiable one.

"Easy there, Vi!" he exclaimed. "Lard ain't behaving just right this Winter, and you have been making the fat fly a bit, but we'll pull through all right with a little patience."

"I'll pull through with the money I've a right to expect, and you can stop that drivell about patience."

She set her under jaw, and glared at him.

John's forehead flushed, and he faced her as if to retort, and then plunged his hands in his pockets, and took a turn across the room and back. He seemed to have mastered his resentment, for he said, almost kindly:

"If you have spent more than you ought, don't be afraid to say so. I will pay. Only draw it light for a little while, Viola, and, after I get round this corner in lard, I'll see about the settled income."

"I don't believe a word about a corner in lard!" she said, viciously. "It's only an excuse for your meanness. We might as well understand each other. I didn't marry you for your beauty!"

"Heaven knows what you married me for," he answered, wearily, "but

you've led me a hell's dance ever since."

Her reply was so coarse I do not care to set it down, and she seemed to consider it a climax, for she dashed into the room on the other side, and banged the door.

John stood irresolute; he took up his hat as if he meant to escape from her company, and then laid it down, and drew a chair to the table. He opened a letter-case he always carried in an inside pocket, and drew from it a long, narrow paper, which he spread out, and then began comparing its items with the contents of the jewel-cases in the bandbox.

I saw the day of wrath approaching with every mark of John's pencil, as he compared his wife's jewels with his former list in order to reinsure them for their home journey. He was an exact man, and performed the smallest business transaction with method.

I was lifting a tray in the last trunk when John's voice shouted "Viola!" so deafeningly that I turned round to see the dénouement that I knew was awaiting me. There was the puzzled look in his stupid, kind face, there was the empty case of the stolen emeralds, and, in a second, there was Madame de Thompkins, who rushed in, alarmed at the violence of her husband's shouts.

"What has become of your emeralds?" he demanded, holding out the velvet case.

She fairly tottered across the room, and held to the back of his chair for support. The advantage of her position was that he could not see her face.

"They were there an hour ago," she said, "when I unlocked the drawer for the packer."

"What packer? What do you mean?" asked John.

"There is a woman here packing my clothes; she is the only person who has had access to my jewelry," said Madame de Thompkins.

Her voice shook as she told this cruel lie, but John could not have been surprised at her agitation, for he was terribly excited himself.

I walked almost to the open door

and, catching her eye, looked her full in the face. Her eyes fell, but we did not speak. John had turned in his chair so that his back was toward me and his face was raised toward Madame de Thompkins.

"Of course she's got 'em!" he exclaimed. "Is she here now? I'll get the detective and have this thing straightened out. You oughtn't to let strange women loose among your things, Viola. Why in thunder can't you pack for yourself?"

"Oh, John, I'm so tired," she complained, and burst into tears.

"Cheer up, old girl," John said, patting her. He never could stand tears. "We'll get 'em back. You keep the young woman busy till I ring up the detective. By the way, where is she?"

I stepped through the door, and laid my hand on his shoulder.

"Here, John," I said, with a friendly smile.

"You!" he cried, stiffening with the shock. "What does this mean, Margaret?"

"Do you think I stole her emeralds, John?" I asked, making no attempt to explain.

"By George, no! I'd take my dying oath on that! Why, Viola, you've made an awful mistake; this lady isn't a packer! She's—she's—ahem!" he finished, rather feebly.

"She's a thief, whatever else you're choking over!" said Madame de Thompkins, violently.

"I am John Thomkins's former wife—indeed, the only one he has ever had, *Mrs. Levy*," I answered, looking at her with anger.

John had sprung from his chair, and she sank into it, a heap of abject terror.

"That woman isn't your wife," I went on, addressing John. "Her husband is living, and she has just given him the emeralds to buy his silence. I overheard the whole transaction. Shall I give it to you in detail?"

"I shall not stay here to be insulted by this creature!" cried Madame de Thompkins. "A pretty sort of coward you are, John Thompkins, not to raise a finger to protect me from her lies!"

She retreated into her sleeping-room, and locked the door.

John's face was a puzzle. He had grown white to the lips, and yet the fire in his eye spoke hope rather than despair.

"For God's sake, say it's true, Margaret!" he pleaded. "Don't make any mistake. He is welcome to the emeralds! He's welcome to the bandbox-ful! He's welcome to the whole lard business, if he'll take Viola along with it!"

He was trembling with excitement.

I made him sit down, and told my story as simply as I could, for only the plainest statement satisfied his craze for facts, and, when I had finished, he put his head on the table, and his shoulders heaved as if he were crying.

"Poor John!" I said, distressed at his emotion. "The whole thing has mortified you beyond endurance."

He raised his head, and steadied his trembling lips.

"It's happiness, Margaret!" he exclaimed. "You can't understand, because you don't know how a woman like that can break a man. I've got my share of sand, and I meant to stick it out and be good to her, too, but sometimes I've made plans to disappear, and I wouldn't be the first man, either! I didn't see any other way to part company with Viola."

"Why did you marry her?" I asked, for curiosity was very keen.

"I was lonely when you went away," he said, simply, "and the house got doleful. I missed having things orderly. But you made me feel such a common beast, that I never dared speak to women of your sort—I just took up with the people who took up with me, and Viola was kind to me at first. I thought she'd make me a good wife, and wouldn't despise me."

"Did you get divorced in order to marry her, John?"

He got very red, and nodded.

"I knew you'd never come back," he explained.

"Independence is sweet," I answered, "even if found in other people's

trunks. I think we were both intended for single harness, John."

"I know I ain't fit to run in double with a thoroughbred," he said, sadly.

"Good-bye," I said, and held out my hand.

"Don't leave me with Viola," he begged. "Just stop a minute."

He knocked at the door, but received no answer, and, after a pause, he went into the passageway and found the outside door leading to her room unlocked. The whole apartment was deserted save by our two selves.

As we stared at each other in amazement, a hall-boy brought John a note scrawled in pencil. It was from Viola, accusing him of all the crimes and meannesses she could think of, declaring she had to leave him after his treatment of her, but that she meant to bring the case before the courts to get alimony—and concluded by ordering her clothes and jewels sent after her to a hotel she named in Brooklyn.

"The impudent hussy!" I exclaimed, in a burst of righteous wrath. "I hope you will not give her a thing except her clothes."

"Why shouldn't I?" he answered. "She wants the things, and I don't. I'll settle something handsome on her, too, as soon as she admits she belongs to Isador Levy."

"John," I said, "you have a great big heart and the temper of an angel!"

"Seen in perspective, when I'm in Chicago and you in New York," he answered, with rather a bitter smile.

"You had better go back to Chicago, now, and enjoy your newly recovered freedom," I laughed. "Once more, good-bye."

I held out my hand.

"Good-bye, Margaret," he said, with a little break in his voice. "Would you mind my coming to see you sometimes when business brings me to New York?"

The request seemed to me an appeal, and I said "Yes," because I had a fancy that the real John Thomkins had the feelings of a gentleman, and I had only had the wit to make acquaintance with the outer man.

HER PHOTOGRAPH

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

*AND this was Jenny! This slim girl,
With merry face and truant curl,
With dancing, daring eyes that fence,
And air of roguish innocence,
Whose parted lips seem still to laugh
From out this faded photograph!*

Only five years ago, and she
Was one and part of us, and we
No better than we ought to be—
Tom, Dick and Harry.
Of one of us the less that's said
The better; Harry's safely dead,
And Dick, his wild oats harvested,
Intends to marry.

Far in some convent's cloistered close
There languishes our tall red Rose,
And Belle is gone—where, no man knows
Nor cares a penny.
To-morrow changed to yesterday;
We lost each other, I and they—
To-night, a turning of the way,
And there was Jenny!

Yet not the same. . . . The play was flat,
And I could gaze serenely at
The curtained box wherein she sat,
Begemmed, brocaded. . . .
("Oh, that's her husband at her side,"
My neighbor casually replied.) . . .
She yawned. I wonder if she sighed.
I'm sure she's faded.

And so, the girl I used to know
About Dick's poor old studio
Now's "the rich Mrs. So-and-So"—
The thing's astounding!
But stranger things have fallen out,
And that was Jenny, past a doubt,
Whatever chance has brought about
This pass confounding.

So only Jenny, of all three,
 Succeeded! Does her memory
 E'er turn to all that used to be?
 In faith, I doubt it!
 And who is happiest—poor Belle,
 Poor Jenny, or poor Rose? Ah, well!
 The answer none of us can tell—
 We're best without it.

*So that was Jenny! That tall dame
 Who bore a rich man's sordid name
 And purse; that woman, weary-eyed,
 Satisfied, yet unsatisfied!
 How can her young lips seem to laugh
 From out this faded photograph?*



SOMEWHAT SURPRISING

"JOHN," remarked Mrs. Bifkins, coldly, at the breakfast-table, "you were saying some rather queer things in your sleep last night. You mentioned something about Kittie and a full house and a show-down and a few other things along that line. What were you talking about?"

Did Mr. Bifkins tell his wife that Kittie was the name of the woman who cleaned out the office and that he was probably dreaming about the full house down at the show the other night? The funny papers would have you believe that he did. But he did not.

"I was probably dreaming of the poker game I sat in that night," he replied without batting an eye. "I lost \$37.15 in that game, by the way, so I can't let you have that \$19.98 for that Spring hat for a couple of weeks."

Did Mrs. Bifkins scream and burst into tears and call him a brute and go right straight back to her mother? The comic writers and the joke-smiths would have you think she did. But she didn't.

"You must be a bum pokerist, John," she said, scornfully; "I don't believe you know a straight-up from a four-flush. I believe I could give you three kings and beat you to the jackpot myself. What did you think you were doing—digging post-holes or playing ping-pong?"



IT LOOKED THAT WAY

CHAPPIE—She passed me without speaking.

SHE—What was she thinking of?

"Nothing, so she afterward told me."

"Oh! then it was intentional."

AN EASTER CAROL

By Ernest Jarrold

THE divine afflatus fell on Barney McGrath one day, and he became an author in imagination. In six months, he had completed his first novel. He called it "An Easter Carol." Barney read his story to his sweetheart, Mary Ellen Slattery, the brewer's daughter, thinking he wanted her criticism, but really seeking approbation. Mary Ellen said the novel was the most beautiful she had ever heard. Sweethearts make poor critics. This was sweetest confirmation of Barney's own opinion, and he looked forward to a quick acceptance by a publisher. Already, in fancy, he saw his name placarded on the dead walls, and saw himself pointed out by admiring women.

It was Barney's intention when his literary ship came in to wed Mary Ellen, and the wedding bells in imagination sounded much sweeter in his ears than the chimes of Easter ringing from the belfry of St. Sebastian's.

But Mary Ellen's father, opulent and hard-hearted, did not share Barney's views about the probable sale of one hundred thousand copies of an Easter story.

"Mary Ellen," said he, "poethry is all very well as a raycreation. To lie in bed of a Sunda' mornin', whin ye ought to be at mass, and hear the chimes, is very pleasant, bekase it costs nothin'. But writin' about Easter carols for money is another matther intirely. If you're goin' to wait 'till your laddybuck earns tin thousand dollars, wid ink and paper and a bit of steel, you'll wait till your hair reaches the ground, and you come from a short-haired family."

"Yes, I know, papa," pleaded Mary Ellen, "but Barney's book is a work of art, full of dramatic situations. Why, the church catches on fire while the Easter wedding ceremony is being performed, and the bells fall from the belfry into the flames. And while the happy couple are on their wedding tour in Northern Russia, the wolves chase the sleigh in which the heroine and hero are riding, and the bride is only saved from a living grave—a living grave, papa—by the heroism of the bridegroom."

"Oh, I know, I know, Mary Ellen, all about it. 'See the pale martyr wid his shirt on fire,' and all that. But I can buy better books nor ever Barney McGrath will write on the push-car-rts at wan cint each. Let him start the fire wid the book and come into the brewery wid me. I'll give him \$5,000 a year. Books are luxuries, but beer is a necessity wid most min."

"He never would do that," replied Mary Ellen, with conviction. "He says his conscience would not permit him to sell beer, which ruins men's kidneys."

"Kidneys, indeed," roared old Slattery. "And what does tea and coffee do to your kidneys, I should like to know? I'm not goin' into a timperance argymint, my gur-rl, but a man of his kidney will never git into the Slattery family. Why didn't he say beer would ruin min's gall, and he makin' love to a brewer's daughter! Your weddin' trusso will be bought wid beer money, Mary Ellen. Easter carol, is it! Shure, a mule will sing a come-all-ye before he'll make anny money out o' that. Now, run away, gur-rl," he

continued, as Mary Ellen tousled his carrot hair with her white hand, "and don't be givin' me anny of your illigint blarney," for Mary Ellen had dimples and a most persuasive tongue.

But Mary Ellen was not discouraged by her father's attitude. In fact, his opposition only caused the fires of love to leap higher on the altar of affection; for she considered Barney to be a martyr persecuted for art's sake. Besides, in secret, she deprecated the fact that her father was a brewer. Brewing she considered to be an ignoble pursuit. She admired tenors and matinee idols and literary men, and so she encouraged Barney to send his book to the most prominent publishers in the city.

It was weary waiting for Barney, for the publishers had the manuscripts of two hundred equally commonplace and similarly ambitious authors to examine before they reached his. Every time the postman's whistle sounded, he had an attack of heart palpitation. At the expiration of two months his novel was returned to him, with a polite note saying that rejection did not imply lack of merit, but that Easter stories were a drug in the market.

The return of his novel somewhat dampened Barney's ideas about literature, and he began to regard the brewery industry with more toleration. Still, he bought a dollar's worth of stamps and sent his manuscript away again. Another wait of six weeks, and again the novel, like the cat, came back, the polished civility of rejection rendering it all the harder to bear.

In the course of eight months, the postman wore a path in the sidewalk carrying the novel back to its author. By this time, Barney's money and literary egotism had vanished, and the brewery loomed on his vision as a harbor of refuge rather than as a purveyor of disease and death.

When Barney's poor luck was conveyed to Slattery by his daughter, he grinned like a Cheshire cat.

"I thought so, Mary Ellen," he said, with a chuckle. "Now, did McGrath say anything agin the brewery lately?"

"Not a word," said Mary Ellen.

"Well, thin, seein' as he's actin' dacint now, I'll publish the book myself, wid pictures and gold edges, on the best o' paper, and Barney's picture on the first page, and a chime of Easter bells, and a sunburst on the cover like the spokes of a brewery-wagon, and I'll have it in the book-stores agin Easter mornin'. There, now, run along, run along," as Mary Ellen kissed the bald spot on the back of his head in a delirium of delight.

Easter Day broke redolent of Spring blossoms and eau-de-cologne. Barney took Mary Ellen to St. Sebastian's, but all through the service his thoughts strayed to the novel, and the *Gloria in Excelsis* sounded like the triumphal march of his literary success.

Barney lunched with Mary Ellen and her father at the conclusion of the services. Easter lilies nodded on the table, while the orchestra played "The Palms." When the coffee was reached an obsequious waiter laid beside Barney's plate a beautifully bound copy of "An Easter Carol." A blush of pride suffused his cheek as he opened the book and saw a picture of himself in an indolent literary attitude. His pulse quickened as he read the author's introduction in double-leaded old-style small pica.

"Read a chapter aloud, me bucko," said Slattery, "to see does it suit you."

The words fairly jumped from Barney's tongue as he read the sentences which were destined to bring him fame and fortune. He turned the first leaf and stopped. He looked up and saw a broad grin on Slattery's face. In the middle of a magnificent description of the wedding pageant these words met his gaze:

"The hat worn by the bride was a dream in color and ornamentation. It came from the well-known establishment of Mme Franciulli, the noted Italian milliner. The famous artist had expended all her skill upon this *chef d'œuvre* of her art. The Easter lilies upon the hat looked so natural that it seemed as if their odor could be discerned. Mme Franciulli invites the criticism of the public at her exquisitely furnished apartments, No. 4 Belvidere avenue."

"'Tis beautiful work, McGrath," said Slattery, ironically. "Here, give me the book till I read a few passages of fine ar-rt."

In a dazed fashion Barney handed the book to Slattery, who read:

"'As the sleigh emerged from the forest, a howl from a famished wolf fell upon the ears of the bride. So pregnant with ferocity was it that the pallid woman drew the collar of her costly seal robe about her ears, shutting out the awful sound. Buried in its warmth and luxury, her thoughts were diverted from her danger to the palatial parlors of Monsieur Pelletier, whose cunning fingers had fashioned it from the raw material, had lined it with crimson silk, and had placed upon it the silver clasps which confined it about her slender body. And the work, she reflected, had been done at a price to defy competition. And there were still a few similar coats to be had at No. 6 Dongerfield Place,' etc.

"Ha, ha," roared Slattery, as Barney arose from his chair, white with anger, and evidently about to leave the room. But Mary Ellen's arms were around his neck in a jiffy, and, only too willing to remain a prisoner under the circumstances, Barney was forced to listen to Slattery, who, between cyclones of laughter, read from the concluding chapter of the book:

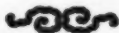
"'The beer drunk at the anniversary of the wedding came from the palatial brewery

of Michael Slattery. It was of a pale golden color, and it rippled over the palate of the bride in a gentle cascade which filled her rounded throat with nectar, and quickened her pulses to a harmonious rhythm. And yet this nepenthe was delivered, bottled and in the wood, at a figure which would astound our readers with its cheapness. For samples, write to Michael Slattery, No. 24 Belgrade avenue.'"

"Will you kindly explain all this, Mr. Slattery?" said Barney to the convulsed Irishman.

"McGrath," said Slattery, waving his eye-glasses, "Mme Franciulli has ordered ten thousand copies of your book, Pelletier has taken fifteen thousand copies to circulate among his customers, and I have ordered twenty-five thousand copies to advertise my beer. You will get a royalty of fifteen per cent. on the lot to-morrow if you don't kick over the traces on account of what you call your ar-rt. I have a dozen more ads. scattered through the book, which are good for fifty thousand more. Now, do you want to be a lit'ry man and starve, or a brewer's son-in-law wid money in the bank, and Mary Ellen?"

Barney's lips refused to reply, but the kiss he gave Mary Ellen was eloquent of consent.



DIFFERENT

COBWIGGER—When your wife searched your pockets, did she find some letters that you had forgotten to post?

GAYBOY—No, some I'd forgotten to burn.



HIS MEANING NOT CLEAR

BIBBS—Is Withers happily married?

GIBBS—I'm in doubt. He says he hasn't felt the need of borrowing trouble since he forsook bachelorhood.

LOVE'S HOUR

THIS is love's hour, sweetheart—mine and yours!—
 This fleeting hour the dreamer's soul deems best,
 Of deepening dusk-time, when the sunset pours
 A warm cascade of color down the West,
 And tinkling strains of twilight troubadours
 Float from the poplar's crest!

This is love's hour, sweetheart—gracious gift!
 When, hand in hand, alone, 'tis ours to go
 Down purpling paths where white-lipped roses lift
 Their light-blown kisses in the starry glow,
 And o'er the sward the locust-blossoms drift
 As soundlessly as snow!

The clashings keen, the clamors that infest
 The noon-wrapped city and its clanging mart,
 Subdued to silence all, have sunk to rest;
 No sounds discordant from the marshes start;
 This is the hour the dreamer's soul deems best—
 This is love's hour, sweetheart!

HILTON R. GREER.



NOT SATISFACTORY

MRS. JAWWORKER—So you are going to leave me, Bridget; haven't I
 treated you like one of the family?
 BRIDGET—Indade, ye have, mum, an' Oi've shtood it as long as Oi'm goin'
 to!



DISAPPOINTING

HE—When Algy married her, everybody thought that he had struck a snug
 berth.
 SHE—Well?
 "It turned out to be nothing better than a 'cozy corner.'"

THE RAINING OF INFLUENCE

By Nivade Chetam

SISTER ALBANIE—SIMONE VINEUIL—
TO MONSIEUR THE VICOMTE RAOUL
DE FROISSAY

THIS letter will find you, monsieur, not in the little apartment which a month ago you found empty, and which nightly since you have visited—ah, I know!—for news of your Simone. I am writing you now, Monsieur Raoul, not, as you suspect, from some other apartment, more gilded and more ornate than that which you provided me, but from my cell in the convent of the Sisters of St. Ursula, where I now make my novitiate, and where, as soon as prayer and solitude have rendered me fit, I shall take the final vows. Permission has been given me by the mother superior, monsieur, to write one letter of farewell to the dear world I leave behind me. And now I write—not to my godmother, as I said—but to you.

I write, my friend, to ask you to forgive me that I have thus deserted you, and to tell you that even now, though my heart is vowed to God, it still belongs to you. For alas! the more I pray for forgetfulness, the more I remember you, my dear.

Then why, still loving you, do I leave you, and vow never to look upon you again? Listen, monsieur, have patience with your Simone, and hear her out; it is the last time—the last!—that you will ever hear from her.

It is now a month ago since the afternoon when I went, according to my custom, to see my sister, Juliette, who lies in the hospital of St. Ursula. I found her feverish, sunken, coughing, but courageously gay. The doctor

had that morning dropped the disguise of hope which he had hitherto worn with her, and warned her that she had but three months to live. She told me of this—smiling. I almost fell fainting in my sobs—figure to yourself, she has been dear to me, this child—but she summoned me to myself.

"Be brave, dear Simone," said she. "I assure you, it does not hurt when one is certain—quite certain—of it. And he told me of it so nicely, this dear doctor!"

So, shamed by the courage of this child, I choked back my tears and tried to be calm. And, still smiling, Juliette told me of the fair meadows of heaven which the priest had promised to her, of the gentle words of the sisters, and of the kind benevolence of the doctor, whom, assuredly, she adores.

"Hold! It is near his hour for visiting me," said she. "Stay with me but a few moments longer, my Simone, and you shall see him. In truth, but he is an angel, this dear Dr. Marvost!"

So, having some curiosity to behold this man who had shown such goodness to my sister, and without doubt of what was to come to me, I remained with Juliette as she asked me. Do not be jealous, my friend! It was not the coming of this man that has changed my life. He was, indeed, when he came, a man of fine figure, sufficiently presentable, and with a kind, handsome face; but after the first glance I had no attention for him. For with him came a lady, tall, sad, beautiful as the day, with the stillness of heaven in her eyes.

The doctor paused beside my sister's

cot; the lady looked down upon her with a smile that was full of tender pity.

"And so she is very sick, this little one?" she asked.

The doctor shook his head. Juliette looked up with a little laugh.

"I have, at any rate, three months to live!" said she.

The lady stood silent, still looking at my sister. The doctor bent down over her bed.

"Madame makes a tour of the hospital this afternoon," said he. "She wishes to know—is there anything you would like?"

The lady waved her hand in an imperious gesture of dismissal.

"You may leave me here, monsieur," said she, "I shall remain and talk with this young girl."

The doctor bowed and moved away; and the lady sank down on her knees beside my sister's little white bed. Ah, with what eyes did she regard the dying one! Two tears, like those which one sees in the images of the Mother of Grief, hung upon her lashes.

"My poor child," she murmured. "My poor child."

I turned away my head. Before that perfect purity, I felt myself too vile a thing to raise my eyes from the dust. And, as the voice went on, speaking to my sister in soft, far-away tones—like those one hears from the altar on Sunday—uttering sweet words of consolation, telling of the glorious home which was waiting for her—then, monsieur, as I listened, I shivered. I remembered the words of endearment to which I was accustomed; "Dear little Simone—*Hou-p-la*, Simone!—Hold, she has a pretty ankle, that little Simone!"

There was a brief silence, then the lady spoke again.

"The world is beautiful, dear," said she. "It is sad to leave it. And yet, it can be a cruel world, too—to us women! I, too—" and her voice broke into silence.

Juliette roused herself in astonishment.

"You, madame!" she cried. "You then have sorrows, too?"

The lady looked at her. "Ah, dear child—" said she.

For a moment she knelt with the face hidden, while Juliette softly touched her floating veil. When the beautiful eyes looked up again, it was with a question that they were bent on Juliette.

"And are you ready, my dear—you are absolved, you have confessed your sins?"

"Every week, madame," replied the feeble, vibrant tones of the little Julie, and I looked up, stung suddenly with the difference between me and the young girl who lay there so tranquilly in her narrow, white death-bed.

"Her sins!" I cried. "She has none, madame! She has none!"

"How can you say that, my sister?" feebly protested the little Juliette, and the lady touched the hollow eyes with a caressing hand.

"Those eyes," said she, "speak the truth, and they tell of the innocence of the dove. My dear, it is hard to die so young. And yet—God is good!—and He is taking you unspotted to Himself."

A sudden fierce joy burned in my heart. Such as my little sister was, I once had been. And if I had died then, at her age, before—before the world had opened for me, would it not have been better a thousand times? God was good; He was taking my little Julie, pure as a lily, to Himself. I exulted in the thought of her escape. But I knew myself, left behind—stained—stained!

The doctor stood again beside the bed.

"The carriage of madame waits below," said he.

As the lady rose to her feet, her hand lingered in that of Juliette.

"Come again, madame!" cried the child, adoringly.

"I will come often—often," promised the lady, bending over her with a kiss. "And here, dear little one, here is something by which to remember your friend." And she took the great

bunch of violets, sweet as May, which she wore upon her bosom, and laid them with a smile upon the pillow beside the flushed face of Juliette.

"*Au revoir!*" said she, and was gone.

I sat silent, not daring to breathe. Juliette buried her face among the violets.

"She is my saint," she whispered in a hushed voice. "I shall say my prayers to her to-night."

When I rose to go, one of the sisters came to speak with me. "She took a fancy to the little one, did she not, madame the vicomtesse?" said she.

"The vicomtesse?" I asked.

"She who was here just now, Madame the Vicomtesse Raoul de Froissay. She comes often of late. An angel, is she not?"

I turned, I could bear no more. This then was your wife, monsieur, this vision of purity and kindness, this angel of mercy! Her eyes were sad, she had spoken of her grief. Ah, I knew now the secret of her sadness! Beside her, how black a thing was I! Yet it was I who had robbed her of what should be all her own.

I hated myself, I writhed in a sudden realization of my unspeakable shame. I turned from the door of the hospital to go home—home to the little apartment which your bounty had furnished for me, and where, my beloved! we had spent so many hours of happiness together. I thought of you—of you, waiting for me. I thought of her—of her, waiting for you. I thought of the words of consolation and mercy which she had spoken to my sister—of her eyes, where the tears of pity gathered and fell—and then, since in our most sincere impulses there is mingled a grain of selfishness, I thought of my little sister, going forward smiling into the bright gates of heaven. And I thought of the mercy that was given to Saint Mary Magdalene—which perhaps might be in store for me. Yet do not think, my well-loved, that through cowardice I sought to buy salvation with a little cheap repentance, or, least of all, think that my love for you has failed! I love you so dearly—

so dearly! It hurts me—oh, it hurts me so to give you up! But I leave you forever—myself I give to heaven; you I give back to her whom heaven gave to you.

I turned back to the convent, I went to the mother superior, and asked her to receive me as a penitent, and, when I was worthy, to admit me into the strictest order of the Sisters of St. Ursula. Gladly, tenderly, were the arms of Mother Church opened to receive me. So, now, behold me, my friend, in the thirtieth day of my novitiate. The gates of the world have closed forever behind me, and in a year I take the black veil.

Adieu, dear Raoul. Do not be angry with me. For my sake, go sometimes to see the little Juliette, whom I never more may see. For her own sake, be faithful to your wife. Pray for me. Good-bye, dear.

Your
SIMONE.

You may write me once in farewell—one letter I am permitted to receive. But remember you are writing not to Simone—but to Sister Albanie.

II

THE VICOMTE RAOUL DE FROISSAY TO SISTER ALBANIE

If I write, as you bid me, not to my Simone, but to a sister of the Ursulans—what can I say? I loved her well, Simone! And, for the sake of the love I bore her, I pray you, sister, to hear me! Tell her whom I love, that I still live—I have lost her, but I still live. Tell her I have obeyed her commands, and have returned to my wife, that frozen and forgiving saint—alas, she has had enough opportunity to practise it, the virtue of forgiveness! Tell her I will go daily, as she asks me, to visit her little sister, and we will talk together of her whom we have lost. Tell her, to no one else but to Holy Church would I have resigned her. It rends my heart to lose her—but it is

not for me, whose name has been for centuries a prop of the Church, to oppose her holy will.

My wife awaits me. She deserves all that I can give her, I go to her—but, oh, sister, I beg of you, do not be too severe upon her, my little Simone! Not too many fastings, not too many vigils, not too many macerations of the flesh. Good-bye, sister, may heaven bless you.

Oh, Simone, why did you do it!
Why did you do it, my little Simone!

R.

III

MADAME THE VICOMTESSE RAOUL DE
FROISSAY TO MONSIEUR THE
DOCTOR MARVOST

You reproach me, my dear friend, that I missed the rendezvous; and you demand when and where we can meet again. *Mon Dieu!* I reply, I know not!

Figure to yourself, my beloved! This husband of mine has turned like the weathercock he is, from what wind I know not—and *psst!* he plays the most devoted once more! Morning, noon and night he follows upon my

footsteps. It is with difficulty, indeed, that I snatch this moment in which to write to you. And, what makes the persecution very hard to bear, is that it is not through jealousy—I assure you, he suspects nothing!—no, it is simply the love of the picturesque that runs in the veins of all the Froissays. *Poseurs*, every one! But it has remained for Raoul, the last of his name, to conceive and develop this rôle, at once so original and so distinguished, of the devoted husband!

But perhaps, to-morrow afternoon—ah, *mon Dieu*, but this is hard to bear! He has just come to announce to me—take courage, my friend—that his heart yearns suddenly to the sick and dying; that, in short, he will hereafter accompany me upon my visits to the hospital of St. Ursula!

Then, upon my soul, he can go alone! For if I go not to the hospital to meet you, my friend, for what reason should I go at all? Ah, that quaint, dusky cabinet of yours, the soft cushions and the strange, faint smell of the drugs!—when shall I see it again?

Good-bye, my cherished one! I dare not write *au revoir!* . . . Oh, a pest upon this marital devotion! A thousand good kisses from your

Suz.



DECIDEDLY SO

FREDDIE—What does a green old age mean, dad?

CAXTON—When a man over seventy gets married again.



THE KIND HE HAD

SHE—Have you many warm friends?

HE—I have a large number of warmed-over ones!

IN HONOR OF ST. JULIAN

By Maurice Francis Egan

A householder and that a great was he;
St. Julian he was in his countree.

—CHAUCER.

THERE are many things to be said against Catherine de' Medici—among these the more cultured of the ignorant put the bringing up of Mary Queen of Scots—but there is one thing that may be safely stated in her favor: she introduced ices into France. Brillat-Savarin says so, in a most trustworthy book, *La Physiologie du Gout*, the title of which has unjustly been translated as "The Physiology of the Gout." I once knew a delightful old clergyman who had lived among criminals, as their prison chaplain, all his long life. He had a benevolent tolerance for them which was admirable. "Is that dreadful Jenny Lopez who killed her father-in-law with you?" somebody asked. "Ah, poor Jenny!" he answered, "her father-in-law was so exasperating, and she has *such* good intentions!" In spite of the position which Catherine de' Medici occupies in the polemics of the philosophical historians, we must tolerantly admit that she imported ices into France, from whence they went to England, and then they came to us. Who shall say that Catherine was not a woman of taste in gastronomical arts? History, when it really becomes a science, will not make philology its basis, but gastronomy, for gastronomy has had enormous influence on the course of nations. We all know that. Take the case of Napoleon. It is on record that Josephine had a most intelligent interest in the cookery suitable for the delicate digestion of a conqueror. We are all aware of what happened when Marie

Louise came in with her heavy Teutonic taste—we have it on the authority of Rostand that the unhappy Duc de Reichstadt was brought up on bonbons. And we know the consequence.

So far, notwithstanding the great activity of life in our country, little has been done to treat the subject of eating and drinking with that serious attention it deserves; and, the worst of it is, all our traditions are bad traditions. Locally, we are in a most unhappy position. Leaving out Louisiana, with its delectable city of New Orleans—where the delicate gumbo flourishes, and where the uses of the ham-bone are artistically considered—various localities sit in exterior darkness. When the Waldorf-Astoria was erected by an eminent sociologist with the view of making the masses exclusive, it was thought that a brilliant example of a *cuisine* in which simplicity and elegance combined might be held before the whole country, and that a people whose composite idea of luxurious food is a half-dozen "ears" of green corn, boiled in salted water and then drenched in salted butter, would easily accept an ideal of simplicity, while gradually becoming aware that it is the basis of elegance. But as a missionary work the Waldorf-Astoria seems to have failed, though in other respects it has succeeded.

In 1840, the minister of France in the United States was the Chevalier de Bacourt, a cross-grained and rather fastidious bachelor. He was related to both Talleyrand and Mirabeau. I do not, however, mention this in order to injure his character—and, by way of reparation, I may add that, if he had

lived to the present time, he would be related to that very sprightly lady who adds to the gaiety of France under the name of "Gyp." The Chevalier de Bacourt found fault continually with our lack of simplicity, though when the populace surged into the White House occasionally, and demanded its dinner on the threat of not voting for Martin Van Buren, he thought that, in this one instance, simplicity had become worse than simpleness. M. de Bacourt found—and this in June, 1840—the best dinner in New York's best restaurant "detestable" and "dear." He complains that, at the fashionable houses, the dinners were seasoned with an intolerable quantity of pepper; but, as, with the exception of the polished and aged Mr. Duer, he says that all "aristocratic" Americans were merely second- or third-class Englishmen, an English dinner was rather in keeping. As to the table decorations, they were merely ornamental, and M. de Bacourt could not find relief in them from the profusion of strange vegetables whose scents "poison" him.

Only forty years before, another minister—and a much cleverer one, Gouverneur Morris—had taken a sane view of the effect of gastronomical appointments on public taste in a new country. Morris was very much in society in Paris, and, when Washington, then President, wanted a *surtout* for his dinner-table, he naturally confided the commission to the elegant minister who habitually consorted with the nobility of the old régime. Morris fulfilled the commission, and writes thus of the *surtout*:

In all there are three groups, two vases and twelve figures. The vases may be used as they are, or when occasion serves, their tops may be laid aside and the vases filled with natural flowers. When the whole *surtout* is to be used for larger companies, the large group will be in the middle, the two smaller ones at the two ends, the vases in the spaces between the three, and the figures distributed along the edge, or, rather, along the sides.

Mr. Morris explains that the *surtout* is of *biscuit*; he adds:

I could have sent you a number of pretty trifles for very little prime cost, but you must have had an annual supply, and your table should have been in the style of a *petite maîtresse* of this city.

I think it very important to fix the taste of our country properly; and I think your example will go very far in that respect. It is therefore my wish that everything about you should be substantially good and majestically plain; made to endure.

The *surtout*, one may be sure, was in much better taste than the great structures of pastry and confectionery, representing castles, bridges and arches, in vogue at this time in the dining-rooms visited by Horace Walpole. The formerly inevitable epergne—a survival of the Georgian era—went out long ago; but occasionally a hostess of our day revives the memory of the *surtout* by dotting her table with meaningless little animals and shepherdesses and Cupids in bisque, or by stationary swans on a centre-piece of glass.

The taste which was to be good and majestically plain—that is, simple—and to be formed by the first President, has not come down to us as a nation. And when a very witty successor of M. de Bacourt said that there were two kinds of architecture in New York, the "beaux arts" and the "bizarre," he might have applied it to our cookery and table decorations. The horrors that infested nearly every American home in the way of haircloth sofas and chairs for the "parlor," and the curious cruets called "casters" for the table, are no more; but the various women's journals, showing how turnips carefully chiseled may serve for mushroom-rooms, and how red flannel, parboiled, makes a very presentable stuffing for olives, are all banded against that simplicity which makes the table of the well-to-do Norman farmer dignified and even elegantly plain. Mock elegance, the elegance of the Parisian *petite maîtresse*, has become a tyrant. And, as mock elegance reigns, simplicity and comfort go out. The millionaire's manner of life, as described lovingly in the daily press, sets the pace. The wife of the man of three thousand dollars a year believes that

she is forced by her "social position" to spend as much on one luncheon as an honest *bourgeoise* of the same class would spend on a score, and yet the normal visitor received by the *bourgeoise*, Parisian or provincial, has much more satisfaction from his fish, fowl and salad than from the ten or twelve courses the American woman will offer him at immense expense of nerve force to her, and a great loss of time to him.

The modern foreigner visitor entertained so lavishly by persons who cannot afford to do it, and who do it with such evident difficulty, is not so frank as the ill-natured de Bacourt was when he was overwhelmed with "barbaric" vegetables and not one sauce in sight. In Mrs. Burton Harrison's "Anglomaniacs"—which is a classic in its way—there is an old countess who expected to find at luncheon a slice of mutton and perhaps a generous quantity of bitter beer; but she was shut in out of the air and sunlight in a room, lighted artificially, with a group of admirably dressed women to assist at the performance of a typical meal in a dozen courses. Mrs. Harrison's old countess's point of view represents that of scores of persons who visit our country, and who leave it, gratified but oppressed. An unfortunate Englishman of moderate means recently left our shores with a heart bowed down. "In New York," he confided to a friend, "I have, for a month, had no luncheon that did not cost at least two pounds and no dinner anywhere for less than five! What am I to do when my hosts and hostesses come to me? They will disdain soup, boiled fowl and a tart. I shall be despised," he "cried," as they do in the novels, "or made bankrupt!"

One of the first of the nobles of France has, after a visit to Newport, lately whispered that gold plate fit for kings was no amelioration for the pangs brought on by costly arrangements of the incompatible and the abuse of champagne, which in certain circles is known as "wine." In those circles there is no other wine. It is

not to the sense of economy which the advanced gastronomist should appeal, but to the desire of the prolongation of enjoyments which the late M. Brillat-Savarin and his later disciples so well understand. Now all the clients of St. Julian, who is the patron of the hospitable, ought to be solicitous for the comfort of their guests—and, more, that their guests should conserve their best powers of conversation; it is not a question of merely tickling the palates of the invited, as the vulgar rich seem to think—they who seem ignorant of gastronomic secrets which the poorest *curé* of Normandy or Provence knows—secrets at once psychological and physiological. And, therefore, all the clients of St. Julian should recall, when they are tempted to abuse champagne, with the best intentions, of course, a certain theorem—to speak it as a dogma might seem irreverent in these days of free-thinking—deduced by the great Brillat-Savarin.

He says, "The first effects (*ab initio*) of champagne are exciting; afterward (*in recessu*), they are stupefying." And the great Corvisart, one of the few real *gourmets* who survived that elegant society of which the exquisite Bishop of Autun was so important a figure, decided that champagne is only possible, to quote Brillat-Savarin's august words, "*frappé de glace*." This doctor, who liked champagne too well, began to drink it at once; and, in the beginning, he was charming; he was brilliant; he coruscated; he was superb. At the dessert, when everybody talked, he became silent, even morose. This was his one fault as a diner-out. In this only was he a *gourmand*; in all else, he was a *gourmet*. This must be said in justice to him. And, by the way, in accentuating the axiom which M. Brillat-Savarin had deduced from the practice of Dr. Corvisart, he regrets that the physician of his time neglected, in his remedies, the natural bent of the taste of the patient. There was the case of M. de Montlusin de Pont de Veyle. The doctor here was terribly cruel. M. de Montlusin de

Pont de Veyle was a person of unusually refined taste in wines. Never had he drunk a red wine that had not the warmth of the sun in it, and never a white, except the wine of Champagne, which was above the temperature of the cellar. The ferocious doctor, whose name is mercifully withheld, not only forbade wine to the invalid, but prescribed for him large doses of water. No sooner was the heartless physician gone than madame, anxious to share in the honor of curing her husband, offered him a large vase of beautiful and limpid water; he received it with docility, and tasted it. "Take it, my dear," he said, "and keep it for another time; I have always heard that one should never trifle with medicines."

This digression recalls the painful convention, known only in our beloved country, by which the guests are forced to sit through a dinner worthy of gluttons with no accompaniment but the crystal fluid with which M. de Montlusin de Pont de Veyle declined to jest.

Horace, who was a gentleman, knowing what a good dinner meant, is all for the simple. The Falernian, yes, and the ancestral plate, with a salad, if you will, of mallows, olives, and endives, but no sculptured cups, worthy of the pontiffs and the vestal virgins.

*Me pascunt olivæ,
Me cichorea, levesque malvæ.*

And the test of gentleness the world over is the perfection of its simplicity—I should say of correct simplicity. Both the Duc de Lauzun and the Duc d'Orléans, Philippe Egalité, ordered, just before they were introduced to Madame Guillotine, repasts fitting the occasion. They had both lost their principles long ago; good taste, however, remained. If I remember the record, they did not mar the occasion with over-luxury; they ordered oysters and a white wine. The only fact set down to the credit of de Lauzun—it will be remembered that he died Duc de Biron—was that he interceded for his wife with the butchers of the Revolution; and to the credit of Egalité,

that he refused, on the way to execution to agree to the marriage of his daughter, Adelaïde, to Robespierre. But, as the latter extenuating circumstance has been proved false, the circumstance that he did not order a red wine with the oysters ought to be recalled, and count for what it may. The pernicious habit adopted by some hosts of forcing sweet cocktails with cherries immediately before the oysters would have made both de Biron and Egalité blush—a phenomenon so unusual that it deserves mention. Whiskey and oysters are really as incompatible as oysters and sugar—but until reformers, like Mrs. Nation, turn their zeal in a sane direction, the true value of the little ironies of chemistry will never be understood by our people.

There are hosts who insist on consulting their own tastes without regard to those of their guests or the combinations which the perfected taste of the world, as settled in France, dictates. It is true there are certain dishes which France cannot claim, and, being ignorant of which, she disdains. This is unfortunate. Brillat-Savarin, who might have saved France from its scorn of cranberry-sauce with turkey, had the good luck to eat a wild turkey, during his exile, in the house of a Connecticut farmer. He does not mention pumpkin-pie, which, alas! the French know not—but he says that there was a chaste evening meal of corned-beef, stewed goose, a leg of mutton, with plenty of "roots" of all kinds, and at each end of the table two large pots of excellent cider. After this came tea. This was in October, 1794. Some days were spent in shooting. Squirrels and a wild turkey-cock were brought down. On the way back, "I," says M. Brillat-Savarin, "was lost in profound reflection; I thought," he adds, solemnly, "of how I should cook my turkey-cock." Nobody had the foresight to suggest cranberry-sauce. He bore the effort of the struggle alone. He trembled for fear that he might not be able to get from Hartford the necessary accompaniments. He admits that he suffered great

anxiety, for he had invited American guests, and he was devoted to St. Julian; besides, his reputation was at stake. And yet nobody dared, so great was the prestige of this Frenchman, to suggest the unique cranberry! He does not give details—"It is enough to say that the wings of the partridges were served *'en papillote'*, and that the gray squirrels simmered in Madeira." He declines to name the details of the preparation of the turkey, which was the only roast at this dinner. "It was charming to the sight, delightful in its odor, and delicious to the taste." Did he use chestnuts, for the Lyons sausage was out of reach? Or onions? Or sage? We shall never know; the secret is lost with that of the man in the iron mask. If—but we can only regret that his approval was not given, for the sake of his nation, to the cranberry-sauce.

The modern *menu à la Amérique du Nord* shudders at pork, because pork cannot be crowded into a little silver or paper box with foolish frills about it. When men learn to eat roast pork without the "crackles," one may believe anything evil of the future; but, when pork is eaten without the sub-acid apple-sauce, predictions of evil are accomplished facts. What to drink with pork has always been a grave question. Neither Brillat-Savarin nor any other director of taste has ever satisfactorily answered it. As to the turkey, that is very different—you would do well to consider whether the turkey has been walnut-fed, after the manner of Florence, chestnut-fed after the manner of France, or the *dindon à la Bordelaise* by which the late Mr. Ward McAllister is best remembered. Brillat-Savarin is silent on the subject of the very young turkey; he would probably have recommended a sound Bordeaux with all turkeys. The turkey *à la Toulouse* or *à la Bordelaise* is plucked from the parent stem in July, and Mr. Ward McAllister played him—to make a mixed metaphor—to the accompaniment either of a white or dark sauce. Justice Greedy, in "A

New Way to Pay Old Debts," is in despair because the cook threatens to serve woodcock without buttered toast, and he rejoices when he hears that the venison is to be done in puff paste. The Elizabethan menu is somewhat heavy, but no more heavy than that of the Victorian epoch as represented by Dickens, whose characters are consoled in almost all situations by tripe and onions or beefsteak with tomato sauce; and this heaviness still clings to the English kitchen, which produces a thin or a thick soup, a joint and a tart, year after year. It is simple enough, but so inelegant that a good cup of coffee was never made in England, and the ices are things of amazement. It is better, being honest, than the *carte du jour* or *du soir* with which we Americans celebrate. The hideous custom, lately come into vogue, of the hostess helping herself first is the result of an artificiality which is spoiling our national manners.

Either the hostess fears, knowing her cook, that the guests may be poisoned, and heroically offers herself as the first victim, or she feels obliged to teach them by example the uses of the various instruments lately introduced to perplex the innocent and please the ostentatious. There is the new kind of oyster-fork, with an apparatus attached which enables the barbarous to cut a too large oyster. There is the new fish-knife, with a repository for the bones in the handle, which is of gold and platinum. There is the entrée-spoon and fork combined, especially adapted to lobster *à la Newburgh*. There are the new imitation-Sheffield affairs, which resemble complicated thimbles. You fit them to your right forefinger and thumb, and you are thus enabled to hold the leg of a quail or squab with safety and "style." There are the combined fork and scissors—shown in the jewellers' windows in Renaissance designs—for mangling lettuce—these are sometimes used—and this is almost too horrible!—for cutting spaghetti into the lengths required by the Goths of our time. There is, too, the orange-cup,

with a little spring in it which grips the golden fruit as in a vise. The hostess shows you how to touch the spring!

All this reminds me of the answer of a young friend of mine to a person who asked if he still kept a samovar—"I did," he said, "until the engineer struck." The hostess of to-day, who wants to keep in the current of table "improvements" must be something of a mechanician; but even such skill, laboriously acquired and exhibited by the aid of electric lights, changing in color with each course, does not compensate for the loss of that simplicity which permitted a dinner to be merely a perfect background for conversation. There are still charming Creole ladies who cherish a ham-bone for gumbo more dearly than all the glittering array of silver and gold instruments that dazzle and affright the ingenuous guest who is not ingenious.

"This, general," an amiable hostess is said to have remarked to General Sheridan, who had taken up an ordinary fork at the beginning of a dinner, "this is the oyster-fork." "Damn it, madam," the general, it is alleged, answered, "I know it!" It is needless to say that this story cannot be true, since the general never used the word "damn" in the presence of ladies; and the addition which makes the general say, "I'll use my sword, if I please," is banal to the last degree; the first is "*ben trovato*;" the second, not "well invented." At any rate, a glance, which is generally one of dismay and fear, at the very elaborate modern table setting would have justified the brave general in any language he could have used.

Chaucer tells us that the tables were always being spread in the house of his famous client of St. Julian; but we know, from other passages in the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales," that even the simple fork was absent from these feasts. One cannot conscientiously recommend a return to the simplicity of a time when a good wash in a big basin was necessary to remove the remains of a dinner from

the guest. In King James's time this process was made agreeable, as Massinger, in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," informs us, by the dropping of precious powders into these pleasant vats.

When is the present ostentation to end? Even in Washington, where the poor but elegant Army and Navy and the careful legations might have been expected to uphold the tradition of elegant simplicity, the service of gold, the strange entrées and the terrible compounds of unknown scraps, accompanied by orchids and electric lights and wonderful mechanical devices, are making the rites of hospitality impossible to the real *gourmet*.

How few there are like the charming lady in one of Brillat-Savarin's anecdotes!—how few there are who know what a good dinner is! But she did, although she had been brought up in an artificial school. She had called on a simple *curé*, to offer alms for his poor, and she did not know that *curés* dine in the middle of the day. Dinner had just been announced, and the *curé* asked her to dine with him. She consented; it was a new era in her life; after that, culinary complications became vulgar in her eyes, *pâté de foie gras* and cream-laden sauces disgusted her, and even Nesselrode pudding, unless made by an artist, made her unhappy. As for liqueurs, she learned to regard a liking for them as a symptom of advancing age. It was a fast day, and this made perfection all the more difficult to attain on the part of the *curé's* old servant, Juliette. The table-cloth glistened, the porcelain was exquisitely white, a decanter of good wine gave color to the board, the plates were kept hot over boiling water. The soup was a *bisque* of crabs, followed by a salmon-trout, with a sauce admirably proportioned, and then came an omelet of fish-roe, so round, so odorous, so redolent of parsley and chives, that for a moment all conversation stopped. A salad, on the leaves of which light dew-like drops quivered, preceded the dessert of three luscious pears, a cheese resembling Camembert,

and a pot of conserves. The *curé* did not say grace until he and his guest had sipped from fragile, but not costly, cups, the limpid and hot Mocha. "No liqueurs!" the *curé* said. "For my friends, yes! But no strong drinks for me, they are the resources of age!"

It is recorded that the lady was affected almost to tears by this combination of simplicity and elegance. It was a revelation; and, to this appreciative marquise, the introduction of the famous *omelette au thon*—the secret of which was almost lost in the Revolution—into Parisian society is due.

When will our leaders of fashion learn the lesson taught by this great

lady of the old world? When will they know that only the jaded palate craves much that is eaten in gilded dining-rooms to-day, and that gold plate and the eternal champagne will not make amends for mosaic salads or—and it fills the sensitive soul with horror to mention it—spaghetti cooked in the American way?

The fruit-pie as a national dish will always remain. Trusts cannot kill it, or the failure of the peach crop wither it; but, while we admit this, can we not mitigate the national reproach by teaching ourselves that

"Good talk is more than dry champagne,
And simple food than truffled ham?"



A BIRTHDAY WISH TO BABETTE

THE Summers come, the Winters go
With their apportioned weal and woe,
And there be those who grieve 'tis so;
But *I* demur at this *propos*,
And dare to wish long seasons yet
For Life to dance his minuet
With you, Babette!

May he move lightly tippie-toe,
And choose the step that best you know.
In sooth, Life is a gallant beau!
And may you smile and tell him so,
When he shall bow with soft regret,
And make his final pirouette
To you, Babette!

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.



NOT ENOUGH

ALICE—I am throwing my love away on Jack.

GRACE—Surely not. He seems as devoted as ever.

"You fail to comprehend my meaning. I've just learned that he gets only ten thousand dollars a year."

THE HILL-SIGHT

*OF love there be two hills:
 Who has seen them, at eve or dawn,
 Wanders forevermore
 Where the wind has gone.*

I

There is one hill of quiet green,
 Girt by a little ring
 Of tremulous apple-trees, all white
 In the sweet air of Spring;
 And no winds stir the gentle peace
 Of their tender blossoming.

And there two slender lovers walk
 Dreamily, hand to hand.
 His face is lit as with a joy
 Too new to understand;
 Her eyes, with some great wonder dimmed,
 Dream in a far-off land.

II

There is a lonely hill of pines,
 Half-dim with purple haze,
 Behind which sets the dying red
 And gold of Autumn days.
 And few come unto it, or know
 Its labyrinthine ways.

And there stand two with unclasped hands:
 He holds a broken lyre;
 Her gaze is past the empty plain,
 Out in the flume of fire
 Where day sinks into the waiting night
 With its dreams and its vain desire.

*Of love there be two hills:
 Who has seen them, at eve or dawn,
 Wanders forevermore
 Where the wind has gone.*

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE.



A RACE-TRACK quotation: "Of the making of books there is no end."

OUR BABY DEPARTMENT

UNDER THIS HEADING, ALL COMPLAINTS FROM BABIES WILL RECEIVE
CONSIDERATION

UPPER FIFTH AVENUE.

DEAR EDITOR:

About four months ago I was born into a family of wealth and social position, and since that unhappy hour I have led a life of misery and neglect. I have seen my mother but once, as she was going to a reception, and then she cut me dead. Imagine my feelings on that sad occasion! I haven't had a particle of nourishing food, and of the two nurses who have charge of me, I don't know which is worse than the other. What would you advise?

VANDYKE K.

Patience! The time will come when you can get even. By-and-bye, when your parents are beginning to let you in on the family games, and ask your opinions about politics, you can sit around and smoke cigarettes, and be seen with soubrettes. As long as they are giving you the icy stare at present, you can get on their nerves by-and-bye. Patience, then, and courage.

DEAR EDITOR:

In spite of the fact that I am the first baby, I have managed to worry along for a couple of years in this family, and live to tell the tale. Being naturally resourceful, I have found quite a little to interest and amuse me, having investigated the inside workings of a clock, discovered the chemical action of red ink on a lace gown, found out that the noise in a drum is purely subjective, and made other interesting experiments. Now, however, I learn to my dismay that I am to be sent to a conventional kindergarten, just as I was getting ambitious to know something worth while.

WILLIE W.

Do not despair. Remember, Willie, that it is always possible to learn, even from a system of education. You can snatch a little knowledge even from the jaws of the kindergarten, and you must remember that youth is not so much a period of satisfying your ambition as of gaining control. By-and-bye, when you get to be about fifty and your school-days are over, you will begin to pick up a few elementary facts. At present, have as much fun as possible out of school.

DEAR MR. EDITOR:

I am a highly nervous and sensitive baby. My father and mother, I regret to say, have the jouncing habit. At times, things go wrong, which naturally makes me irritable; but no sooner do I display the slightest signs of this than the horrible jouncing begins, and my father, I regret to say, is not only a jouncer, but a dangler. That is to say, while, in some public conveyance, for instance, my mother is jouncing me up and down, my father dangles some

horrible thing in front of my eyes. Imagine my mortification! At present, I am almost a hopeless imbecile. What can I do?

CLARA J.

It is certainly too bad that your parents have turned out so badly. At present, no doubt, you never display any irritation unless there's something really important the matter with you. But, hereafter, yell all the time, whether or not there is anything the matter with you. It will be very hard at first, and you will have to go through the continuous jouncing performance, but if you can keep it up, you may, in time, attract the attention of the authorities, who will take your misguided parents in hand, and show them how you ought to be treated.



'TIS CANDLE TIME

'TIS candle time; the day has grayed
To dusk; the low tea-table's laid,
And Flo and Phyllis cozily
Discuss their world, and sip their tea
From curious cups of priceless jade.

'Tis now each calls a spade a spade,
For, if there is one hour made
For gossip most especially,
'Tis candle time!

"Mabella's gown's a horrid shade;
Whatever made her choose brocade?"
"Gwen's flirting just outrageously—
She'll soon win Jack from poor Marie!—"
Alas! I'm very much afraid
'Tis scandal time!

CAROLINE MISCHKA ROBERTS.



HOW THEY AGREED

MR. MARTIN was fond of pets, and was somewhat inclined to boast of the friendly feeling existing among his dogs, guinea-pigs, owls and fancy pigeons. One day a neighbor, who had reason to suspect that all was not going well on the Martin side of the fence, asked if the latest acquisition, a fine Angora cat, was living in harmony with the other animals.

"How," asked the neighbor, "do your young rabbits and your new cat agree?"

"Beautifully," replied Mr. Martin. "The cat eats the rabbits, and the rabbits agree with the cat."

"SOUNDING BRASS"

By Emery Pottle

THE train had but just left Utica, and, more than that, it was two hours late.

"It will be at least a decade before we reach New York," complained Miss Malden, opening, for the fifth reluctant time, her magazine, in the empty hope that something unforeseen therein might amuse her. She had inventoried her chilly, fretful fellow-travelers earlier in the afternoon; the sum of their personalities had sent her hastily to her reading again. She took to wondering how many beads had gone to the trivial decoration of the grim woman across the aisle; and even attempted to count the little hacking coughs of the frail lad ahead; presently, she wondered idly why the tall young chap, who had earlier secured the chair next hers, did not sit in it, and offer her a possible diversion, instead of smoking himself to death in the buffet-car, as she idly concluded he must be doing. She roused herself with a deprecating laugh at the nonsense her vagrant brain had seized upon.

The young man, whom she had carelessly reverted to, indeed at that moment, returned to his seat, and gazed about with the vague discomfort which assails a man of long, loosely-fitted limbs, in a Pullman. In an uneasy swing of his chair, his foot, by chance, touched Miss Malden's. His words of excuse, quick in coming, did not efface the deepened lines of her face which her earlier smile had brought. So encouraged indefinitely, her neighbor glanced at her with a certain deferential boldness, which elab-

orated instantly into surprise and gratified desire.

"I may be wrong, but surely not," he said in an eager tone which, nevertheless, carried an accent of deprecation and of the wish to conform to all proprieties. "Surely you are Miss Caroline Malden, the au—" he caught the trite word on his tongue and finished—"the lady who writes the novels and short stories every one talks about."

Miss Malden nodded tolerantly, waiting for him to continue: she wondered why he had swallowed "authoress"—the change of phrase interested her. He did not hesitate: "It was the profile that made me certain—I saw it—your picture—in *The Light*, last month." He smiled at his ability to enforce his contention.

"But that was taken in evening dress," she smiled back, parleying with him; "how could you—?"

"Oh, I knew," he returned, triumphantly, adding after an instant—"I am—my name is Peter Bridge."

"You have taken all the honors," Miss Malden answered, lightly, "of our acquaintance, introducing yourself and leaving me no opportunity to disclose, dramatically, my identity at the end of our journey. You go to New York? Good. I am terribly bored with this prosperous country, this prosperous magazine, and, in fact, my prosperous self, Mr. Bridge. Let us talk incessantly the rest of the way."

Miss Malden gave herself with more than her wonted freedom—partly from relief at the promised diversion, partly

from a desire to prove Bridge's stuff. The man responded with boyish enthusiasm—so boyish, in fact, that Miss Malden, for the moment, forgot to take accurate note of the marks on her companion which confessed, at the most, about thirty years.

Bridge dragged the talk laboriously to herself with such a persistence and so frank a curiosity that, at last, Miss Malden, with a brief prayer for mercy to the gods of the things that are, allowed him to have his way; and, indeed, she did not find wholly unpleasing his half awe and half envy of her secure position in the market-place of book-makers.

"Do you believe the things you write?" He put it, after an intent pause, so boldly that she started. "The things you make your people say, I mean?"

"Ultimately—as bits of knowledge—yes. I believe them in this way, perhaps: that I believe there are people in the world who believe those things. You understand that I—that any one who writes—must, too, put into some characters real personal beliefs hammered out of life."

She regarded him with a closer interest; he had a trick of eyes—a constant shifting of them, not so much, it appeared, from reluctance to meet hers, as from uncertainty of the proprieties of the occasion. The tangle of his black hair fell not ungracefully on his forehead; his extraordinarily good-looking face and expressive physique held possibilities, she recorded, of experience. Her eyes sought approvingly the deep cleft in his chin.

"Wait," he said, abruptly, and, thrusting out a long arm, he drew his bag to him. Miss Malden needed not the evidence of the well-known blue-cover to acquaint her with his design.

"Here," he went on, spreading a recent novel of hers on her knee, with an attitude of familiarity she did not resent. "You make Sarah say: 'My dear Blair, there's nothing in New York that counts save results—you can speak with the tongues of angels, yet without these oblations to the god

Success you're nothing but sounding brass.' Do you believe that?"

"Yes, I believe that—why not? No one wants you unless you bring him what he demands? Abel—wasn't it?—brought his god a burnt offering, the best of his flock, and Cain brought of the fruit of the ground. And unto Cain's offering the Lord had not respect," she replied with underlying seriousness.

"Yes, but Cain slew Abel," Bridge said, sharply.

Miss Malden laughed. "Ah! and he bore the murderer's mark on his forehead."

"I suppose you are right," he answered slowly, referring to the earlier moment of their talk. "It's hard for a man to stand on what he is."

"A man *is* what he achieves; there is no *is* back of the achievement—if you understand me?"

"Results—as you call them—are only a cloak," Bridge said, moodily.

"A cloak knit from the fiber of your mind and soul," she answered, largely.

"But a cloak."

"No, not a cloak! Results are yourself in precipitate."

For an instant, Miss Malden caught his eyes; their dark, nervous intensity held her, half startled; then he turned consciously, to stare out at the dreary succession of spinning farm-houses, expanding rushing into clotted towns, scattering again into the dullness of the solitary brown, Spring fields.

When he spoke again, it was with the return to his youthful ingenuousness—his smile, a droll twist of his sensitive lips, a quick show of his fine teeth, Miss Malden reflected, would win him much; and yet it seemed, unaccountably, to contradict the impression of power in reserve which his face—an habitually moody one—begot in her.

"Literary people are mighty interesting, aren't they?"

"Yes—to themselves, always," said Miss Malden, shrugging.

"They must be if they're all like you," he dared. The candid compliment, not to be denied by her, put him

into humor with himself. "But they must be, though. Wonderful! I—I've always wanted to know some one who wrote books, and now I know *you*." Miss Malden was amused at his calm progression. "I've never known but one other author," he continued, slowly.

With a scant desire for the implied experience, she put the question—"Tell me of that one."

But Bridge uneasily thrust her off. "He was a poor thing—I—I didn't know him well."

He went back. "There can't be any class of people whose results are so great as the writers'—"

"Or so inadequate," she put in.

He laughed, but at his coming words it appeared—"They are a sort of gods to me. I want to know the people who write. Is it hard? Could I?" he appealed.

"It depends on whether you want to talk or to listen," Miss Malden parried. She began to feel him too close to her gates.

Bridge disregarded the remark and said, haltingly: "I'm a Westerner—I've lived nearly all my life in a little town in Illinois, not a very literary habitat. And I've been poor—you don't mind my telling all this?—and have had to fight for all I got. But I've *wanted*—great God—I beg your pardon—*everything*. I've starved and thought and worked and slaved and—wondered. This is the first time I've ever been in New York. What I've got I've fought for," he repeated at the end.

"What have you got?" Miss Malden found herself asking against her will; suddenly she found herself resenting Bridge—for some indefinable lack of—to use a dull word—sincerity.

His eyes twinkled. "I'll tell you—some day." Then with abrupt change of manner, as on the heels of a resolve, he faced her: "Have you ever read a book called 'Hampden'?"

"I finished it only last week," said Miss Malden, suddenly alert; the book had swept her off her feet; it was the memory of it that had taken the edge

from her own work for days, and spoiled her enjoyment of other reading.

"Did you like it?" he pursued, eagerly.

"It is the best thing that has come out in years—it's an epic, a crude, elementary, rough-shod epic. It's big, enormously big, with material in it for three books. It left me breathless—with anger and admiration. It lacks so much that it makes up for so tumultuously; it's full of wretched bits of English—but, oh, the power and abandon of the thing! It made my own book look like writing in the sand." Miss Malden flushed with the vigor of the expression.

"This man," she continued, "this John Peters, who wrote it—the publishers tell me it is some assumed name—they know almost nothing of him. He lives in the West somewhere, and refuses to see any one, or speak of himself—remarkable in these days when we shout from the housetops what we have done and are about to do."

Bridge lay back in his chair, his lean, nervous hands clasping one knee, his eyes shifting, and his features set and unspeaking. His silence checked Miss Malden's words, though, in truth, she was not voicing them any more for him than for herself.

"And you have read it, too?" she said, presently.

"Yes."

"Perhaps it—" she began, doubtfully.

"Can you keep a secret?" he asked, at length, brusquely, to her annoyance. She made no reply, and he accepted the rebuff.

"The book is mine," he said, slowly. "I wrote 'Hampden.'"

"You?" Miss Malden felt a swift resentment, which she knew was childishly unfounded. With quick warmth she put out her hand, and grasped his.

"For your results," she said. "You have brought the firstlings of your flock." He bowed over her hand, flushing a deep, long-continuing red.

The lights of the city, gold sown broadcast in a field of purple, were stretching out in long level lines, in terraced banks, in clustering masses, friendly, inspiring lights, when they ceased talking of his book. Bridge gazed out at them shrinkingly, then with a rush of desire.

"They're great, aren't they?" he said, unreservedly.

"Yes, they're everything—'friend o' my nights, and the lights o' the town'—they're the world, and sometimes they're the life everlasting," Miss Malden murmured.

"You'll keep my secret?" Bridge said later, as they stood up in the bustle of arriving. "It's a caprice with me, my little incognito—I want to win without my cloak, you know."

She faced him, again vaguely repulsed.

"Yes—yes, I'll keep it. But—success to you," she finished hastily, and gave him a quick hand.

"May I come to see you?"

She gave him her card with a word of direction, wondering.

"Good night," he said, and walked hesitatingly away; then, with a sudden boyish return, he shook both her hands.

"You're my first real author," he laughed. "We're bound to be great friends."

In spite of all, he was convincing in this.

II

THE thin film of Spring lay over Washington square, green, tenuous, likely to yield, so it occurred to Caroline Malden, at any moment to the pressure of life beneath it, and to free the striving buds and leaves. Of late, she had awakened daily with a little breathless suspense, thinking to find the Spring-transfiguration, as the rays of morning struck the white shield of her expectation—her mind seized on the poet's figure avidly. And this particular Spring filled her strangely with a sense of something about to be

revealed to her; an inner voice was exclaiming: "Now, now."

She had been at home a month, she reflected, as she descended the steps of her apartment-house on the north of the square, and walked indecisively to the corner of the Avenue. Miss Malden felt a pleased consciousness, indeed, of accord with the day; her writing that morning had moved with a stride; her mental alertness had been a tangible, joyous quality. The warmth and candor of the afternoon had led her to put on a gown of some pale gray stuff; she added a boa of filmy gray chiffon about her neck, suited to the clear pallor of her skin; and, after an instant of hesitation, she had caught up a daffodil from a bunch sent her that morning, and thrust it into her belt.

It was a question, as she lingered on the corner, though not a grave matter, whether she should take a stage or walk. The appearance of Dakin settled the doubt.

"Caroline," he said, gratefully, "you are back with us again! When did you tear yourself away from your primitive facts and your elemental types in—where is it you've been, anyway? You're the wraith—no, the materialized wraith of the Spring day—in your grays and yellows. Come, now, erase that look of 'stage or no stage,' and walk with me up the Avenue, and we'll go to see Jeannette Mills, and drink her tea, and hear who's in and who's an outsider."

It was a genuine pleasure to see Dakin; the composed maturity of him, his simple acceptance of the liberties of friendship, his compass of the art of stimulating her to give to him all that the subtle compliment of his attitude toward her asked, gratified her. She came to Dakin, she realized in a flash, always with reassurance, with the little sense of having forgotten how desirable he was.

Laughing, she began to answer in the eager speech he liked: "From Butte, Montana, Chester—which your sophistication can't grasp. Tell me, have you ever been west of Sixth

avenue? A month ago I got back, and you've not been to see me, faithless person. I'd love to drink Jeanette's tea—and perhaps I'll find I'm an outsider now, myself."

"I have been away, fishing in Florida—came back only last night, and I give you my word I was on my way to see you at the moment."

"Still fishing, and killing things, and traveling everywhere, and doing everything that people demand of you socially?" she asked, half reproachfully.

"Yes," he replied. "Still doing all that, Caroline. But let me off this good Spring day, and let's play happily together. Tell me of yourself."

"There's nothing to tell—don't I always begin that way? I've been away for six months, and I am rash enough to believe I have the stuff for the best novel I've ever done—here." She touched her head impressively.

"My dear girl, when you do your best novel, you'll have to have it here." He repeated her gesture, gravely touching his heart.

"Mine or yours?" she asked, ruefully.

"Yours—you've known mine these five years," Dakin returned, solemnly.

"Please, Chester—not to-day," Miss Malden caught him up with nervous haste.

"Am I never to achieve—anything?"

Dakin smiled at the somewhat obvious implication of his sentence. Miss Malden snatched at the opening with a quick idea of protection.

"You are to achieve everything—if you only will. Oh, Chester, Chester—you wrest nothing but grace and smiles from the world; I'm always saying it; and boring you dreadfully, but I believe so in results, things done and accomplished. It's my creed; every day I grow older I confess to it."

Dakin put in with gentle irrelevance, "However old you grow, Caroline, you'll always be younger than the rest of us."

Miss Malden laughed. "You're a dear; you leave me with my stupid old sermons as dust in my mouth."

"Why do you care so for my results, as you academically call them? Can't you accept *me*, without them? There must be a *me* that you have found, well, not unpleasing—take that. Must I be famous to count really with you?"

"I care for the evidences of work and energy spent—I can't help it; they are strong with me—the successes; I glory so in the fact of success. You"—she smiled apologetically—"are the only one who upsets my theories." His words had sent her mind swiftly to her meeting with Peter Bridge, to her discomposure.

"In other words, my dear Caroline, your Leander must swim the Hellespont to get you? If I had become a senator, or a great sculptor, or had created a colossal trust; if I crushed a thousand men in a wheat deal, or sang 'Home, Sweet Home' to the ecstatic sorrow of a vast audience; above all, if I had done a great book"—Miss Malden flushed unguardedly—"you might not be averse to marrying me?"

"It might help," she admitted, soberly.

Dakin sighed. "Perhaps you are right. Often you are—always, maybe, in reading me. 'To the end Spring winds will sow disquietude.'"

In the subsequent moments of silence, they met Peter Bridge. The unexpected encounter brought again—to her anger—the quick color to Miss Malden's cheeks; Bridge, indeed, paused, as if to halt them, then, breaking the illogical awkwardness of the meeting, bowed, lower, to be sure, than was necessary, and with an assured "How do you do, Miss Malden?" went by.

Miss Malden spoke resentfully and against her desire not to explain.

"He—I met him, by chance, in the train, coming East, a month ago. He is interesting; he is bound to do great things, I believe. He comes from some little town in the Middle West—Illinois, as I remember."

"Ah, a resouter—if you'll allow the word. I cannot compete with them," said Dakin, slowly shaking his head.

Miss Malden was betrayed into irritation.

"It's not a question of competition, my dear Chester. Here we are at Jeannette's."

"By-the-bye," Dakin remarked, as they stood at the door, "I am leaving for Illinois to-morrow night—some beastly matter of legal business over some property of mine there. I shall be away perhaps a fortnight."

"It's shabby of you to go just as I get back to town," Miss Malden answered. All at once, she felt a nervous premonition of something ill, unwelcome, overturning.

III

PARTING from Dakin at the Millses', and this with foreboding reluctance, Miss Malden had wandered in on other friends, later keeping an engagement with a girl she had known in college days. And, finding the renewal of this memorial friendship suddenly intolerable, she had broken away, on some slight plea, and had come home.

It was no surprise to her to find Peter Bridge at the hansom step on reaching home. He said, defensively: "I knew you had this engagement to-night, but I waited around here, hoping you might by chance come home early—I wanted to see you—and now you have come."

The unreasoning resentment in her that she, in fact, had come, tempted her, indeed, to go at once into the house. But her eyes falling on Bridge, bare-headed, the glow of a near-by electric lamp falling on his loose dark hair and sharpening the cameo beauty of his face—which in the uncertain illumination held a hitherto unsuspected spirituality—rested there gratefully.

"Well, then?" she laughed, commiserating herself.

"Would you mind coming into the Park? It's deserted now—fairly. We can sit there somewhere."

She went with him; there was nothing in Caroline Malden of a trivial conventionality to embarrass her accept-

ance of the opportunity; her hesitation was an involuntary mental recoil against something she derided herself for.

Miss Malden let him take her, and his air of protection did not lessen his value, to a bench in the thick shadows of the Park. They were alone, for the few about were of a sort too alien to distract. She leaned back, watching him, the heavy, breathless, inert heat of the late April night hanging around her.

Bridge began, abruptly.

"You have been—are—mighty good to me—you've taken me in, a stranger"—he disregarded her gesture of protest—"you have; you have introduced me to your kind, the best kind, too, and you've let me know, best of all—yourself."

His possession of her was astounding, she thought. What right—?

Her reply—he waited for it—was distant enough.

"You need not thank me—it was the courtesy of a fellow-craftsman to another—if it has been anything at all—to you."

"Anything?" he repeated, with an unmistakable intonation. "It has been—why do I use that tense constantly—is what I have dreamed of, hoped for, despaired of," he went on floridly. The shifting of a heavy tree-shadow from his face left it suddenly bare to the lights; she gasped at its beautiful elation.

"You don't know—you couldn't—what it's all been for me before this. I want to tell you of myself," he proceeded in a low voice, "so you'll—understand."

She gave him a quick glance.

What did it matter what she understood? she wondered, but her eyes fell before his.

Bridge pushed his hair from his forehead. "Oh, it's always been hell for me. My father—he hated me, I don't know why; we had nothing in common. Out there on that little miserable farm, as a lad, I've lain many a night in the corn-fields till morning, afraid to go in and see his hateful face. I used to

dream things out there—big things, the kind of things you represent. And my mother, she was good to me when she had time—but she despised her life there and brooded over it till—it's a rough story, hers—till one day—I was a kid and didn't understand—she ran off with some man. Couldn't stand it any longer. She was handsome, my mother. I don't know why she ever took to my father. And—afterward I got a letter from her once; and I didn't hear any more till I was fifteen, and then a young fellow, who came along selling books, told a story of a woman getting shot in a—a place you couldn't imagine—oh, it was all terrible. And—he mentioned the name of the woman—it was hers—great God, big as I was I cried all night out on the prairie—I'll—I'll—never forget that. I've had to work, Lord, how I've worked. He—my father—gave me no pay, and the little schooling I got, I almost stole. But I read—books a preacher lent me, and a lot of paper-covered things my mother had hidden under the floor of the loft. They made me crazy to see things, to do things, to be things— You don't mind my telling all this?" he broke off.

"It's—no, go on," she said, fascinatedly.

"He drank like a beast after mother went, and the place got into pitiful shape. Poor—we starved—I almost gave up hope. There didn't seem to be any use of anything. But still I kept seeing things *big*, you know, and then—thank God, he died. I was seventeen."

"And then?" Miss Malden said, sharply.

"Then?" he hesitated painfully, but recovered and continued doggedly. "I got my chance. An uncle and his wife took the place. I stayed with them. And—and they were kind, according to their lights—and sent me to school when I could be spared. Later, I had a time of running wild—you wouldn't want to hear that—it's not very pleasant—none of it is pleasant, God knows; but that—well, a cousin of mine, their son, came home, to die they thought.

He—he was a bright fellow, had a good education and had been East and all that. He'd—why he was only thirty-two and I was twenty-four then—he'd taught school, and there was a fire in the building, and he was fearfully burned and crippled, trying to save people. Somehow—I can't tell it very well—he didn't die, then; they got him home, and he lasted three years—poor fellow. Oh, it was cruel to see him, misshapen and scarred and agonized. He wouldn't see any one but me and his parents. He—he talked to me about writing, and encouraged me, and told me I could get on, and—and criticized the things I tried to put on paper, and—and, well, he—died at last."

"Poor boy," murmured Miss Malden, the picture of the broken life haunting her miserably.

"Him?"

She nodded.

"It had to be—that way."

"And you—?" she asked, slowly.

He turned from her, and his words were almost unintelligible; the strength had left his voice, and he muttered, "I?—I went on—writing—and then came 'Hampden'—and now"—he whispered, with a sudden facing of her—"and now *you*."

There was no protesting; it had gone too far for that; it was indeed—"and now you." Inevitably he had taken her into his life, and, at the moment, struggle seemed unavailing. His crude story fastened on her intense imagination until, strangely enough, it seemed to her as if she had shared that mean life with him. Yet the appeal of the man beside outweighed the appeal of the story; vaguely she was conscious that the pathos of it all had not wrung her heart—she had not said "Poor boy!" to Bridge. It gave her a sense of personal pride in Bridge that he had conquered so splendidly, and had come out with his beauty and his achievement so tremendously unscathed.

In the silence that followed his confessions, she, wondering at the impulse, took his hand. He crushed hers in his murmuring again, "And now you."

"It has all been equipment," Miss

Malden said, at length, withdrawing her hand with a feeling of relief. She could not find any sincerity of sympathy for the man, fired though she was by the greatness of his struggle.

He was more subdued than she had ever seen him when he replied.

"Equipment?—yes, for much; but for all—all that a man, when he has found it, cries out with his whole mind and soul for—is it equipment for that?"

Something in her swayed at his presence; back somewhere, her mind—hitherto her rock of defense—stood firm, but she could not now command it. It was absurd to pretend not to understand him; she was not a woman of trifling. With a wrench, she forced back something of her wonted sense of security, and rose.

"I must go in," she said, not unkindly.

"You shall answer—some day."

She shivered as she laughed, "Every one must answer—for every thing—some day."

He quivered under her words. As they parted, he said, haltingly: "I wanted you to know it all—and understand. And may I bring you the manuscript of the new book to read?"

"Oh, I *must* see it. Come! come soon!" she cried, eagerly.

Yet her first act on reaching her rooms was to wrench the wilted daffodil from her belt and fling it away—for Bridge had sent the flower to her that morning.

IV

THE reading of the manuscript of Bridge's novel left Caroline Malden with cold hands and amazed, humbled brain. To her, to whom the power of herself to write was a constantly recurrent marvel, that ability, enhanced ten-fold, in so untried and formless—for so he impressed her at every turn—a person as Peter Bridge was little short of miraculous. There had always been that in her which came near to worshiping at the seats of the mighty in literature. And this "desperado in letters"—so she had early

called him—this man who had discovered himself to her, who had given himself into her keeping—to find him with what seemed to her the very intimate spark from the divine altar—oh, it was tremendous.

"The power of him!" she cried; "the unconserved force!"

Miss Malden paced the room in her excitement, tingling with the potentiality of it all. Here was the breadth of "Hampden," to be sure; the crudities of construction and of English; the prodigality of material; the sweep and breathlessness of treatment; but there was more—there was a subtlety, an inevitableness of character work, she phrased it, lacking in the former book.

It was like a breath of clean wind in hot, shut-up rooms, to be associated with a man who could create such a novel. She had to face her elation, and, analyst that she was, she perceived that the fact of her possession of Bridge was a potent factor therein. This book of his, she owned reluctantly, did much to break down the barriers that her mind kept involuntarily raising against the man and his former life. The appeal that his physical charm had for her, she felt, in her solitary moments, she could combat, but to lose the antagonism of her brain to him, meant—well, much more than she, at the instant, cared to think into words.

That Bridge was in love with her, she did not trouble to dispute. This new relation with Bridge affected her as none before in her thirty-five years. The very fact of its daring, its incongruity—he was, surely, much younger than she—attracted her.

"I have outlived the period of the *grande passion*," she assured herself in her nervous walk, "that, I admit. I am not sure that I want marriage—yet— There's no use of me trying to hide under the cover of the lady patron, the noble woman friend—he's to be more to me than that relation offers—or he's nothing. He can't be kept at arm's length— Oh, I wish to heaven he'd never come my way. I

can't reconcile him to my life. Yet—yet now, at this moment, I can't let him go."

She was not shut to the fact that few women can easily give up their hold on a man, once it has become established; it is not so much that they are loath to suffer as that they shrink from the gap thus to be made in their habit of life and thought.

Miss Malden left the personal for the more impersonal as she said: "It is a wonderful piece of work—wonderful. The time has come for people to know of him, to give him his due praise." She had never compassed Bridge's reluctance to keep the secret of his authorship of his books; it had always seemed more a boyish caprice than any well-defined logical reason.

"His idea of succeeding with people on the strength of himself unaided is trivial. The very fact of his achievement is too much *himself* to conceal it. If he's anything, he's his work. But—I wonder what would happen to him if people really *knew*? Would it spoil him for everything—for me?" she deliberated, half smiling at her attitude. "And I wonder what Chester Dakin would say of him, if he knew? Chester is a just judge, at least."

Beyond the instant appreciation of Bridge's personal and unusual beauty, Miss Malden recognized that the men and women with whom she had brought him in contact had not found him wonderfully acceptable. Jeannette Mills had said of him, "Caroline, you have annexed Narcissus—are you his mirror? Frankly, my dear, he's a beautiful ornament, but is he anything else?" and Miss Malden, with an indignation not all assumed, had replied: "I'm not a collector of Greek gods. Wait."

Her eagerness to talk made the servant's announcement that Mr. Bridge was in the drawing-room peculiarly pleasant. She hurried to him, her hands outstretched. The light in her eyes assured Bridge even before her words came. And he flushed deeply, troubled by some inward shrinking, it seemed.

"Well?" he said, shortly.

"You are wonderful," she flashed at him.

"It is good, then?"

"Tremendous."

"Then I'm content. I've only one thought—that's to please you," he said, with sudden intensity of mouth and eyes.

Miss Malden quivered under the tone.

"You do more than that—you will please the world—What is it? Where is it in you?" she went on, solemnly. "You constantly annoy me with your power to write. I can't understand it—I can't find it in you. How came you by it?" She put her hand on his arm, looking intently into his face—his eyes avoiding hers.

"This voice of yours crying in the wilderness—what *right* have you to it?"

Bridge shrank back from her. He bent over the little fire in the grate, and savagely thrust the poker into the embers. When he again turned to her, his face was older, she thought, less perfect, with traces of a consuming struggle; yet his smile was gay and tender.

"God gave it to me that I might win you," he said, slowly. And, on the instant, she believed him, and was silent in the truth of his words. She let him take her hand, yet, when he bent to kiss her, she smiled sorrowfully, "Not yet."

Later they fell into talk of his book.

"I recognized your mother's story in it," said Miss Malden.

The trouble in his eyes led her to shift abruptly to something else she wanted much to say.

"Next week there are to be half-a-dozen people here at my house—Jeannette Mills—you know her—Fabian, the publisher, Burrows, the editor of *The Light*, and two or three others. And I want you to come." He smiled eager acquiescence. "I want you to read from this new book of yours—will you?"

"Oh, I can't. I—no, really, I—forgive me, I couldn't. You see—" he stammered nervously.

"You must. I insist. You sha'n't betray your secret. I'll say that a— a cousin, if you like, wrote it and— what is it?"

Bridge had paled in a ghastly way. "Nothing," he muttered. "The room is hot. I'm a little tired, I think. Don't bother."

She brought him something to drink, and after a moment went on, less assuredly: "I want you to do this—for—for reasons. You can say anything you like, only Fabian must hear it. The thing is too wonderful for him to miss." Seeing he hesitated, she added: "To please me. Please—Peter."

His name, new on her lips, transformed him. "I will. I'll do anything on God's earth to please *you*. I'm silly, I suppose, about keeping it secret, but if you say it sha'n't be known just yet, as mine—I'll do it—for you."

His acceptance won him more, perhaps, than he guessed, with her.

"You'll keep my secret, though?" he added.

She assented with a laugh.

They talked on till late in the afternoon, and, when he left her, Miss Malden knew for the first time that she was, indeed, to be more to Bridge than a friend.

V

MISS MALDEN had said, indifferently at the beginning, that she wanted them to hear Mr. Peter Bridge read portions of an unprinted novel, freshly written by a friend—Bridge had stipulated "friend"—of his. She had found it of more than usual interest, she added, and knew that they, too, would like the chance to hear it.

Jeannette Mills had whispered to Burrows: "This is a little the worst that Caroline has ever done. Foisting this on us. What in the world possesses her? She'll be giving stereopticon lectures yet."

Burrows nodded, gossipy. "There isn't anything—er—of more than—a—literarily romantic about this, is

there? He's very good to look at. Can't tell what the female novelist is likely to do, you know."

Jeannette Mills shook her head in horrified dissent at his facetiousness. Bridge had begun speaking.

He was looking exceedingly handsome in the evening dress he had easily taken to; his eyes shifted rapidly, but his voice, low, restrained, held their attention wonderfully. Briefly, but with rising enthusiasm, he began to outline the plot of the tale. Fabian, a heavy, idol-faced man, adjusted his eye-glasses, and stared woodenly at Bridge.

Presently, Bridge began to read—with no attempt at elocutionary effect, but eagerly, in a low-pitched voice, slurring his vowels, and in the gradual cumulation of intensity, racing along at top-speed, yet with a sharp, cutting distinctness.

Miss Malden, herself keyed to the utter importance of the test which she had planned, in reality, as a justification to herself, watched keenly the faces of her guests. Fabian's narrow eyes began to glitter, and Burrows's thin, skeptical face warmed to shrewd admiration; Jeannette Mills and the others forgot the attitudes of polite sufferance, and listened obliviously. The triumph was Miss Malden's; the smile in her eyes was like a flood of sun on fields long shadowed.

It wanted only the silent entrance of Dakin to complete the assurance of the hour. He slipped into a chair beside Miss Malden, with a gesture of apology for his tweed traveling clothes; she gave him a quick smile of pleasure, understanding, forgiveness; then forgot to watch his face.

When Bridge finished, he dropped his manuscript on a table, and left the room abruptly. The low murmur of admiration, started by Jeannette Mills, swelled, in the ensuing freedom of the reader's absence, into a chatter of eager praise.

"Caroline, my dear, that is perfectly stunning stuff," she cried, "*stunning!* A friend of Mr.—Mr.—yes—Bridge wrote it, you say? Do you know

the man? It's the best thing of the year."

Burrows eyed Fabian interrogatively under cover of the general exclamation. Fabian nodded impressively.

"I think so, too," said Burrows, eagerly.

"It's great," said the publisher between his teeth, gutturally. "There's been nothing that can touch it, of its kind, except—"

"I know," went on Burrows. "You mean 'Hampden,' eh? I thought so. It's like it, but it's better stuff than that book, though. Eh, Miss Malden? We were saying the book bids fair to be better than 'Hampden'—did you read that?"

She flushed excitedly, too elated for many words, and, after a moment of appreciation, went on. She wondered vaguely where Dakin was. Burrows continued to talk in low, concise tones to Fabian. She caught, with sharpened ears "Serial rights," and, "At least forty or fifty thousand copies."

Miss Malden's desire to see Bridge was so strong that she slipped silently from the drawing-room, and into the dining-room. Bridge stood by the buffet pouring himself a drink; Dakin was beside him. She saw that Bridge's hands were shaking; Dakin, more than ever, was his cool, unapproachable, contained self. The sight of the two together discomposed her for an instant. Their contrast, to her, knowing them both from within, was, all at once, absurdly glaring. There was a touch of pity in her heart for Dakin, the older friend; all that he had been to her, and it was much, seemed to balance so trivially with the triumph of Bridge.

"You two out here alone, convivially gossiping! What disloyalty! Chester, I'm so pleased that you turned up to-night. I needed you to complete the evening. Wasn't it splendid?"

Dakin answered, soberly: "It was—splendid, Caroline. Mr. Bridge's friend is to be congratulated."

She smiled at his commendation. "Isn't it so?" and turned to Bridge, standing silent and ill at ease.

Dakin continued, evenly: "I was just saying to Mr. Bridge that I left only yesterday his native state—Illinois, I believe. I spent a night in a little place, Floydsville, which he tells me is near his own town—I think you said?" Bridge nodded.

"Then you two will have plenty to talk over—but you sha'n't do it now. I claim him myself, Chester," she cut in, authoritatively.

Reading, with sorry acuteness, her desire to be alone with Bridge, Dakin bowed and strolled away, a queer shadow in his eyes.

Miss Malden seized Bridge's hands, impulsively. "Peter, Peter—you were splendid, they're all talking of you; you—you have won."

Bridge pulled himself together with a sharp effort; his face tense; his fingers gripping hers.

"All?" he whispered, brokenly. "Have I won all? My God, tell me!"

"All," she breathed, half-frightened.

He bent and kissed her, tears standing in his eyes.

"I couldn't bear to stay there," he said, some moments later, "and hear them. It meant so much to me—and I knew that it was, in a way, your test of me. Oh, yes, it was. Tell me, dearest, if it hadn't been for the book, would you, could you—could I, the plain I, have won?"

Miss Malden laughed, nervously. "But your books are you. There is no you, to me, outside of them, don't you see? And, if you hadn't written them, why, I'd never have known you, Peter."

He sighed. "And then I'd be just your 'sounding brass,' wouldn't I?"

"You're an angel, tongues and all—come, we must go back."

The enthusiasm only broke out afresh at the entrance of Bridge. The little group clustered round him greedily, plying him with questions; Fabian edged up to him puffily. And Bridge, flushing like a boy in the excitement of their candid interest, and his own double secret, answered eagerly, his eyes aflame, his breath coming sharply.

The punch was brought, and Dakin, stepping quietly into the circle, raised

his glass; his eyes were on the tall, handsome figure of Bridge. "I want to propose a health to the unknown author," he said, slowly and distinctly. He saw Bridge waver, but only for an instant. They drank, eagerly receptive of the idea, Bridge with them, with cries of approval and praise.

An impulse, too dramatic, too triumphant for the artist in her to put aside, swept Caroline Malden. She caught Bridge by the hand and, in a breathless, laughing excitement, drew him forth. "My friends, *this* is the unknown author. *This* is he—the author of 'Hampden' and of—" Her voice was lost in the shout of instant congratulation, as her guests beset him. They wrung his hands; the men clapped him heavily on his back, with loud praises; Jeannette Mills flung him her bunch of violets. Only Caroline Malden noticed angrily that Dakin made no recognition of the news.

Through it all Bridge stood white and immovable, his eyes wandering helplessly. His face, that had, at first, flushed purple, was ghastly pale.

"It's secrets," continued Miss Malden, her face radiant at Bridge's great moment; secretly she was a little irritated over the way he was taking his honors. "I have betrayed Mr. Bridge shamelessly. The one condition on which he promised to read to-night was that I should not tell you all the truth, that he wrote the book. Keep the secret for me—won't you? Don't let it out for a few days." She smiled understandingly at Bridge for reassurance and clemency.

But the evident disquietude of the man over his betrayal, and his distraught manner, presently had its effect; the group broke up, and with some final words of familiar, exaggerated commendation, drifted homeward, Fabian saying, "Mind, at one to-morrow, Mr. Bridge, for luncheon." Bridge bowed, absently.

"Wait in the library," whispered Miss Malden to Peter in passing. Dakin approached him, and said something rapidly in a low, flat tone. Bridge

nodded, a hurt look in his eyes as if of some racking pain.

"You'll tell her?" he muttered, hopelessly appealing.

Dakin assented. "To-night—you'd better go."

"Great God, man, you don't understand, you don't understand!" cried Bridge, putting out his hands to ward off the blow. "I love her." He staggered away from Dakin, who shook his head reluctantly.

So it was, after all, Dakin who stayed, after the others had gone that night. Caroline Malden, with Bridge's name softly on her lips, found him in the library, gazing sternly into the little bed of coals on the hearth. His eyes, pitying yet honest, met hers, bewildered and questioning and foreboding.

VI

THERE were no preliminary fencings between the two old friends. He shook his head at her gesture toward a chair, and she accepted the refusal, wearily sinking into a low seat near the fire.

"Well?" she said at length, in a voice that demanded the utmost he had to impart.

"I want you to listen to a story. Something that happened to me on this journey of mine," he began simply. Miss Malden suddenly felt anew the clarity of Dakin's personality, the gentleness in him, and the justness—felt it in an amazement that this instant could so re-reveal it all to her.

"I told you, perhaps, that my trip was to include the inspection of some farms that my father had acquired in Illinois—in fact most of my stay was in the lower part of that state in some hopeless, God-forsaken little towns. But that part of my story is unimportant enough. A week ago, it was, I'd been driving about all day with a man—I hired him and his 'buggy' to pilot me about. I was aching tired—we'd driven since morning, you know, and the horse was a wreck. Toward night it began to rain, a great thundering

flood, that presently settled into the most drenching downpour you can imagine. We were miles from our point of supplies—I mean clothes and lodgings. To add to the wet misery of it all the wagon wheel 'buckled on us.' Well, briefly, we crawled on in the rain to a little four corners, called Floydsville—just a store and a blacksmith's shop and some houses, and besought the people at the nearest house—a decent enough farm-house—for shelter. There were only a man and his wife, old and outworked; they hesitated, but we told them our wretched state, and after a while they went into an inner room where we heard whispering. Then they came out, and said we might stay there for the night. They gave us some dry clothes and supper, good and hot, and it wasn't long before my driver crawled off to bed. I stayed to talk with the two by the kitchen stove.

"They weren't given to talking though; beyond the fact that they said the farm had come to them from a brother of the man—who, I gathered, was a bad lot—they said little else except that their son was an invalid. He never saw any one. He'd been hurt, I found by questioning, in some fire, years before.

"The woman kept going into the sick man's room, and each time she returned she looked more anxious. 'Is he worse?' said the father; she answered, 'Yes—he's having another of his bad spells.' I offered my assistance, but they refused point-blank. Presently, they left me alone there with the groans of that sick fellow in my ears. It was pretty bad. When the father came out again, he told me that he was going for the doctor, and asked if I'd mind keeping about till he returned—it seems he had to go ten miles to the next village.

"The mother came out, crying—Lord, it was mighty unpleasant. 'He wants to be lifted—I can't do it,' she said. 'Why, I'll do it,' I told her. 'He won't let any one see him,' was all I could get out of her. 'Ask him if I can't help—tell him I'm an Easterner, going away to-morrow, I'll never see

him again—persuade him somehow,' I begged her. He must have heard my voice for he called out, suddenly, 'Let him come if he wants to, mother.' You should have seen her look. 'He ain't done that before ever since he's been sick,' she said, motioning me to follow her.

"Good God, Caroline, I hope never again to see so awful a living human being—his thin, weazered face was bitterly scarred and disfigured—livid—he was drawn and bent and misshapen. It took all my nerve not to start at the sight. Well, you know, my brother was ill for years, and I got used then to a sick-room, so I wasn't all at odds with the situation; I helped all I could, talking with him, and giving him a little brandy I happened to have in a flask. And the fellow took to me in some way, and, by-and-bye, sent his mother out of the room. And then his pain began to ease up a bit, and he talked. I sat there by his bed for hours. It was as if I were speaking to some hideous shape that held a beautiful soul, imprisoned there by an old witch's black art—I wish you could have seen his eyes—they were beautiful and absolutely unspoiled. I—some way—I can't explain it—we got on tremendously. After a while he began, in a feeble voice, to tell me his own story—if you could have heard it! There was copy for you, solemn, awful copy. He'd been a teacher—Oh, I can't give the pathos, and strangeness, and unreality, and tragedy of him—and then had been injured in this fire, and had gone home to die. But he didn't die—he lived; and lying there—he told me that he'd not seen a single other face save that of his parents, the doctor, and a cousin, for years—he began to imagine things, and presently they took shape and form. I should explain that this cousin, it appears, was a wild, handsome fellow, whose father had died and left his parents the farm they were on. He was a brilliant ne'er-do-well, who, after trying a dozen things, got into a nasty mess over a forged cheque, and had come home to live with them. The sick chap liked

him—he was only weak, not bad—and took him in. As I was saying, these things in his mind took shape, and he began to dictate stuff to this cousin of his. Later it all worked out into a novel called—" Dakin hesitated, loath to strike the blow.

"Hampden," said Miss Malden, inevitably.

He bowed. "You know that book's success. And then he wrote another, his aunt's story, he said—never by word or line letting the world know who wrote that first book. His publishers did not even guess—his pen name is John Peters, I believe, and his cousin, so he told me, was now East here, to place the story with a better publisher. You talk of mute Miltons—that man lying there in that mean little bedroom—God, I can't forget it." Dakin paused, his eyes turned from Miss Malden. Outside, the sharp, distant clang of a trolley-car, the rattle, and oncoming clatter of an elevated train reached them in the purposeless silence of the room.

"Well," she said again, without emphasis.

"Some time—long after—the doctor came, and we stayed on together, with his parents, watching. About dawn he—he died. I stayed until after it was all over— That's all."

His waiting silence was merciful to her. She made no attempt to analyze her emotions; she gave no sign, save increased pallor, of anything she might have been fighting, or repressing, or accepting. For Dakin it was all pity.

"You had to know," he said, at last, slowly.

She nodded. "Yes, I had to know."

He made as if to leave the room, but she held up her hand imperatively.

"Does he know?" she said in a low, colorless tone.

"That I know the truth of it? Yes."

"But of the death?"

"No—I think not—they couldn't reach him here."

"Then don't tell him."

Dakin assented gravely. It was as if Miss Malden were about to speak further, but she turned away, instead,

and Dakin left her, doubtful yet sure. When he had gone, it seemed to Caroline Malden, oddly enough, that a great comfort had gone out of her presence.

VII

AFTER all, she had room to reflect, as she sat there alone, in the immediate emptiness of Dakin's departure, after all, she had been a fool, so to cherish the "preciousness" of her relation with Bridge; for it had been precious, that was undeniably open to her. It was difficult—perhaps impossible, for that matter—to compass, at present, more than her own hurt. She was hurt, she eagerly confessed, hurt and sore and indignant. The last feeling would not bear probing, she knew; for it was really an indignation that had its sources in her humiliation over the part she had allowed herself to play. She preferred to hold before her eyes the dull fact that her dream had been only an impossible illusion; that life could mean, from now on, only work, work, work. Incongruously, she wondered how this experience *would* affect her writing.

But Bridge—there was a tangible factor! He had lied; he had played a coward's game; he had cheated her—and her position in the world only added to the shame of it—and that other, the dead man. Oh, it was contemptible from every standpoint. It was easy to be angry here. She had cause, she felt, righteous cause, and the act of thinking anger, logically brought reinforced anger to her; in the outward expression of it she leaped to her feet, and paced the room turbulently. Anger in her eyes like a little green flame. There was to her an exalted satisfaction in this; it enfolded her mind and kept her from the enervating pity she was bound to feel, sooner or later, for Bridge.

So it happened that in this excited period she faced Bridge in the doorway. In a flash she gauged him, and, such was the abnormal sharpness of the moment, she knew him at his best.

It was, in the end then, to be pity for Bridge; the fact of his love for her assured him that boon. The absurdity of anger now made her smile bitterly. The wind was out of her sails at the sight of his wretchedness.

It was as if, in the brief time their eyes met, he, too, read her absolutely; read the end as well as the beginning of all that had been between them, and accepted it with more simplicity than he had ever shown. Things were amazingly simplified for both of them, indeed.

The note of their meeting was sounded.

"I had to come back," he said, quietly, "you knew that."

"Yes," Miss Malden said, "you had to come back."

"There is no need to go over it all," he continued; "over all the truth he told you."

She assumed a question in his voice and replied: "No, you can't better it—or make it much worse, can you?"

Bridge shook his head. "But there was the extenuating circumstance."

The pleading of this was like Bridge; it would, she knew, for all its shallowness in the face of honor, always be his hold on her.

She put it into words, "The circumstance of your love for me?"

"Yes, yes; that! That's real—it's the most real part of me. That's the real me—my love for you. Everything else has gone; and now it's over I'm glad of it. And I'm left with that only—but it's much. It can't be called sounding brass—that." He came closer to her. "You won't rob me of that—this love? You won't leave me destitute, will you?" He laughed in pathetic triumph. "Oh, you can't take that from me; my love for you is mine, to keep always. I don't want anything more than that. I'd be a fool to ask it. I know all I am, better than you because I've lived with it; it's slept with me, and walked with me, and almost driven me crazy."

It was Bridge's moment; she acknowledged it. In all that was to

happen, he would still be splendid in this.

"But that love can never replace, or make good, the honor you have lost," Miss Malden had to say.

He winced, but met it bravely.

"It will help me," he said, unaffectedly.

The thought of herself obtruded for a moment.

"You have hurt me, and shamed me, and—lied to me, terribly. Couldn't you have spared me anything in all this?" she said, half-impatiently. "What was it you hoped for?" she added. The question had to come some time.

His abasement was utter. "You—you are right to say it. I deserve everything, every punishment. Oh, it is punishment—I'm bound to suffer for it always. You'll forget. You must forget—because you never loved me."

His penetration left her with no word.

"I'll keep the bitterness of it, and the joy of it always," he repeated, doggedly. "You can say that a man who would do as I have done—lied and cheated and forged—I did forge—will never pull up. He's weak, you'll say, when you argue it all out, and he'll come to a bad end. I'm bad enough now, but you must know this—you'll believe me this once?—I never before loved any woman. That's God's truth."

He took up her previous question. "You want to know why I did it all—hurt you, and shamed you, and lied? Well, that day, in the train when I saw you and recognized you—I knew, all at once, that I was going to love you—that's falling in love, isn't it? And then you let me talk to you. It came over me that I wasn't anything under the sun that could hold you to me. You talked of people having to show results and—well, I wanted to 'show off,' as they say of little boys. I began to lie—not definitely thinking that anything would come of it all. You see I wanted some of *you*—I was awfully alone. And you gave me

yourself. You can't think what it was to feel that you—you, who were beautiful, and successful and *wonderful* to me—admired me. I forgot that I wasn't what you thought; sometimes I thought I must be—almost. Then here in New York—why, I loved you—not for your writing or your place in letters, or your mind—I just loved *you*. And I knew miserably, underneath, that all I was to you was those books. I couldn't give you up—God help me! Don't ask how I expected to keep up my deception; how I was to go on writing books and fooling you. I don't know. I didn't think that far. It was all *now* and *you* to me." He stopped abruptly, then added, "It may be wrong—but I'd do it all again to win you, God knows."

Miss Malden was crying silently, without bitterness, and with a pity, somehow, as great for herself as for the man before her.

When he spoke again, it was with the awkwardness of his plight in his face.

"If there is anything I can do to make this right with—with the others—?"

She controlled her voice. "The making of conditions seems trivial now. You have left me with nothing to say. Would you understand if I told you that, in some vague way I am grateful to you for showing me myself? But I must ask of you this: Will you tell those people who were here to-night enough of the truth to—to—?"

"Yes. I'll do that," he said, humbly.

There seemed nothing more to say. Indeed, unspokenly, but understandingly, they had traversed the whole ground as with a harrow. Their silence but cumulated into an anguish for them both. Bridge turned to go;

his eyes, for once firm, took in the room hungrily, and then came back to her for a long, devouring pause. She felt them, but did not meet them.

"There is something more," she said, slowly, "that you must know. He—your cousin is dead." She could not avoid the baldness of the words.

He met the news, after the first finching, strangely.

"Maybe that is my chance."

She did not understand, and let her eyes inquire.

"To go back and help and make good what he never knew I made bad," he explained, hesitatingly.

She nodded, ashamed of her doubt in his capacity.

He read her, as he had during the evening, with preternatural sharpness.

"You don't believe me, do you? You can't think of me as succeeding in—in—right things? I know. And you're justified. Can I ask this? If ever I *am* right—if I make anything right out of my life, if I'm not sounding brass—may I tell you—write to tell you?" he pleaded.

"Yes, you may tell me," she said, gently.

It was all—and more—than she could give; he accepted it, and told her with his eyes the truth of how wonderful she was to him.

"That shall be my result to offer you," he answered, solemnly.

At the door, he turned and said, slowly—it was his only attempt at a farewell—"Do you mind my saying this last thing: If you marry some fellow some day, marry him for himself, for him, what he is—not for anything else."

When she was at last alone, and had free play to think out the truth of it all, she wondered if he had meant—Dakin.



THE EVERLASTING ROUND

WHEN Christmas holidays are o'er
I slap my empty pocket,
And vows to save I straightway score
Upon my mental docket.
I settle down; my balance grows,
By sacrifice expanded—
For Easter clothes and flowers it goes,
And I once more am stranded!

A second time I think that now
I'm done with wild expenses,
And register anew my vow
To patch my gaping fences.
I live within a sober law,
All little pleasures flouting—
And every last red cent I draw
To meet my Summer's outing!

Hotel and other sundries paid,
I'm home, completely busted,
To muse, with feelings sore dismayed,
On talents to me trusted.
But now I *will* save—every groat!
I'll knock off all this bumming—
And suddenly I get a note
Which says that *Nell* is coming!

When *Nell* has gone—the time we've had
With opera, drive and party!—
A bank account I have, egad!
Still far from hale and hearty!
And, while I swear, with steadfast mind,
That nothing else shall queer me,
And try again—alas! I find
That Christmas looms a-near me!

EDWIN L. SABIN.



PURPOSELY MISUNDERSTOOD

HEWITT—I seldom think of my audience when I'm acting.
JEWETT—But you ought to have some consideration for them.

LOVE'S HUMILITY

I WEAR you as a star upon my breast,
 A seal upon my brow for aye, and sing
 Your love, a song that knows no silencing—
 A triumph-cry that will not be repressed.
 It seems to me, the world is all aflame
 With wonder at my joy; and, when I lift
 My eyes to meet its steadfast watching, swift
 Leaps to my lips the fire of your dear name.

But set me in the sanctum of your soul,
 Close doors of silence on me; go your way,
 Nor speak nor breathe the secret where I hide;
 Fare forth on any path to any goal,
 Only turn heartward, hour by hour, to say
 You love me—so I shall be satisfied!

NANNIE BYRD TURNER.



PERMITTED NONE TO ESCAPE

SHE—It is said that she accepts every man who proposes.
 HE—Yes, and she just as good as accepts a lot who don't.



THE WAY IT HAPPENED

SHE—Archibald was always trying to avoid the girls. Where did he meet
 the one he afterward married?
 HE—He didn't meet her. She overtook him.



A DAM, who was the first man to brag of his salad dressing, was not, unfortunately, the last.

THE MAJOR'S AUTOMOBILE

By Ruth Kimball Gardiner

IT was the only automobile in the state, and the major swelled with pride every time he looked at it. He had gone clear to Chicago to select it, and he had insisted on having the fastest and most completely equipped machine that could be turned out. He had scoffed at insignificant runabouts with a speed of fifteen miles an hour and the ability to run merely forty miles with one charging. Forty miles would not take him once around his farm, he said, and, if he wanted to creep at a snail's pace, he might as well walk and be done with it.

In point of fact the major's farm, if it had been square, which it was not, would have stretched only three miles in each direction, and as for walking, he possessed a wooden leg, and never took one step more than was absolutely necessary. However, he was not speaking under oath. He was merely buying an automobile, and as his nine sections had ripened into Number One Hard Perfection the season before, he felt that no common machine was an adequate expression of his prosperity. His heart was set on something that went by electricity. If he wanted to smell gasoline, he said, he could carry a bottle of it about with him, and sprinkle himself occasionally, and, if he wanted to be hauled around the wheat country by steam, he could hitch a sulky to the traction engine. No, he must have an electric-carriage. His farm-house and his men's quarters and his barns were lighted by electricity, and if the plant on the grounds couldn't supply power for one automobile, he didn't see what it was good for, anyway. He wanted

a blood-red man-eater, he said, with a plate-glass show-window set up in front, and a speed of not less than a mile a minute.

It was, indeed, an exceptional machine, that automobile of his. Even on Michigan avenue it was remarkable. On the boundless prairie of the wheat country its advent was little short of epoch-making. The major wished that the entire state had but a single eye, that he might make it pop out with amazement. With his new wonder, he felt precisely as in his boyhood days he had imagined he would feel if he were ever so unthinkably rich as to own a gilded circus-chariot.

There was only one wrinkle in the rose-leaf of his content. He could not share his new toy with Beresford. He could only toot his horn scornfully as he dashed past the ripening fields of his neighbor. A year ago, he could have talked to Beresford by the hour of generators and batteries and pinion gears and volts and ammeters and all the other intricate wonders of his car. A year ago, Beresford would have been the first man to ride in it, and Beresford's sister, the Hon. Mrs. Durnford, the first woman. In those days, Beresford had been his best friend; a man after the major's own heart; a man, too, after the heart of the major's daughter, with the major's sanction to the seeking. Now, Beresford was a reptile—the loathsome offspring of a race of vipers—an unprincipled, grasping, unscrupulous scoundrel, for whom hanging was too honorable a death.

It was merely a piece of land, which the major contemptuously referred to as "a city backyard," that had re-

vealed Beresford's moral deformity. For years the major had wanted that quarter-section. It belonged to Ole Olson, and the stolid Scandinavian could not be brought to see his plain duty in the matter. He clung to his little patch of wheat, and refused all the major's offers. Then had come the incredible day when, in response to the major's thousandth appeal, the misguided Ole had replied, unemotionally:

"Ae tank Ae sale to Mr. Beresford. He claim he buy."

Now, Beresford was utterly ignorant of the fact that the major's heart was set on that particular quarter-section. He had bought it simply because Olson had offered to sell it, and why Olson refused it to the major only the gods who understand the workings of the Scandinavian mind can tell. The unfortunate Beresford was totally unprepared for the major's subsequent conduct. However, he was not seriously disturbed. He told himself that the major would cool down presently, and things would go on as they had gone on before.

But Beresford did not know the major. In the first flush of his rage, that gentleman had said a great deal more than he had intended to say, but having said it, pride forbade him to retract. He informed his daughter that, if she so much as looked the way Beresford walked, he would pack her off to her aunt in Dresden, and Betty thereafter walked circumspectly, though she privately assured Beresford that a dozen fathers could never make her constancy waver. Even the major could not but admit that a literal adherence to his command concerning Beresford and the direction of her gaze would mean her retirement from the altogether feverish gaiety of the wheat-country Summer. She might refrain from watching Beresford walk, but it was impossible to avoid seeing him across a dinner-table, or even out of the corner of her eye at a dance. There were men and to spare within the sixty-mile radius of local society, but not every man was the son

of a baronet, and a lord of twelve sections of wheat land, without a barren acre or a mortgage on it anywhere. The major could not ask his friends to close their doors to a man simply because he happened to be a reptile, and he did not propose to be driven into outer darkness himself.

As a matter of fact, there is precious little darkness in the short span of the wheat-country Summer. Dawn rouses the baby day in its third hour, and twilight lingers till ten. There is only enough deep blue gloom to give the vain light an excuse to display larger and brighter jewels than other skies possess. The wheat must grow as no weed ever dared grow, and ripen to be clear of the frosts which dog the steps of August, and the sun must hasten his rising and delay his setting to oblige the wheat. In the splendor of the long day, twenty miles to a dinner-party is the merest step. The major had beforetime grumbled at the loss of sleep which Betty's fondness for going everywhere the rest of the two counties went, entailed, but now, with his new automobile, he sniffed invitations from afar as the war-horse the battle. He would go till the automobile fell to pieces rather than that Beresford should have a chance to talk with Betty, or dance with Betty, or hand Betty cake at any picnic.

Early August had come, and the major's nine sections were ready for the cutting. In former years, the major had followed the reapers to the field in a rattletrap gig. Now, he attended the ceremony in his crimson car, and but for the unreasonable obstinacy of the farm horses, he would have headed the procession in a glory such as Solomon's wildest dreams never knew. The major's horses, however, were not pleased with the idea of assisting at a triumphal march. As it was obviously impossible to blind them, and back them all the way to the field, the major was obliged reluctantly to follow, instead of leading. He rolled slowly to the section which touched Beresford's land, and there halted, while the reap-

ing-machines, seven abreast, began their long circuit. Where but an hour before the hosts of the wheat had stood, the thin stubble was strewn with their prostrate forms, contemptuously flung into sheaves, and tossed aside by the clanking, lunging reapers.

On Beresford's land, too, the reapers were cutting their multiple swath, and the forgiving Irishman, in the fullness of his heart, thought the time propitious for bringing about a reconciliation. He rode across the field, and lifted his hat.

"Good morning, major," he called out, quite as if nothing had happened to disturb their friendship, "finest wheat in the state, this."

The major sat in stony silence. Beresford rode nearer.

"Major," he began, "about that bit of land of Olson's, now——"

"Not another word, sir!" roared the major. "You have acted in a way that is beneath contempt, and you know what I think about it. Don't dare at this late day to attempt any apology."

Beresford had long ago offered innumerable apologies, but he let that pass.

"I had no intention of apologizing," he said, easily. "I merely wanted to explain that I bought the land because Miss Betty liked the look of it."

"You bought it to keep me from getting it!" retorted the major.

"Oh, come," said Beresford, "be easy now, major. It's no great matter at all. It's the same as yours already, and 'twill soon be Miss Betty's."

"Betty's!" the major burst out. "Betty's! What the devil do you mean, you impudent scoundrel?"

Beresford flushed.

"It's no use to waste hard words over it," he said. "You know what I mean as well as I do. Miss Betty's done me the honor to say she'll marry me, and we're tired of waiting."

The major turned two shades redder than his automobile.

"Get off my land!" he shouted. "Don't you dare speak my daughter's name, you serpent! You'll wait till

you're black in the face before you marry my daughter. Get off my land before you make me forget myself!"

Beresford turned, and rode toward his own possessions.

"I'll not wait one second longer than Miss Betty bids me," he called back. "I've waited, thinking you'd come to your senses, but I'm at the end of my patience with you. Miss Betty's going to marry me, and I'll be asking no one else to name the day. Just put that in your pipe and smoke it, major."

The major's reply was inarticulate, but emphatic. His state of mind was such that a flock of wet hens were not a circumstance to him for fury. He had been grossly insulted, and Beresford had flung in a taunt for full measure. He quivered with wrath as he turned his crimson car toward home. Only for the sake of the Hon. Mrs. Durnford, he told himself, had he refrained from doing violence to her reptilian brother.

Betty had been a distant witness to the meeting, and one glance at her father's face told her the state of things.

"Pack up your things this instant!" the major ordered. "And don't you dare say one word. I'm going to take you to Fargo."

"To Fargo!" Betty faltered. "Why, when?"

"The sooner the better," said the major. "This state is no fit place for a girl with a lot of vipers running loose. You're going down to Fargo this very day, and you're not going to stop there, either. Dresden is the place for you, and that's where I'm going to send you."

"There's no train before to-morrow," said Betty, fighting for time.

"Train!" cried the major; "we're not going by train. What d'ye reckon I bought that man-eater for if I can't run it eighty miles? You go and pack up your things, and don't you try to irritate me. We're going to start in just one hour."

"Father," said Betty, desperately, "I know perfectly well why you're taking me away, and it isn't a bit of use. You can take me to Siberia if you

like, but I'm going to marry Dick Beresford, and you may as well make up your mind to it."

"Don't irritate me," the major shouted. "I'll take you where that snake of an Irishman can't find you in a thousand years."

"I'll write to him," Betty retorted.

"Write all you like," answered the major, "and much good it'll do you. I reckon they know a thing or two about girls like you in Dresden. You can write a book if you choose, but you go to Fargo in just one hour."

The major's hour had grown into two when at last the red car rolled away across the prairie. On the front seat were the major and Betty. On the back seat lay the boxes which the major meant to leave in the nearest village to be sent on by express. He wanted to travel fast and light, with no unnecessary luggage to interfere with his progress.

Betty was silent. She had despatched a frantic note to Beresford and another to his sister, and she had not yet given up hope. If Beresford could not stop the major, possibly Mrs. Durnford could. At least, they knew what was happening, and Beresford would find some way to see her before she was out of reach. Five minutes' speech with him would suffice to arrange some plan for outwitting her father. Failing that, Betty felt that Dresden spelled despair. She strained her eyes across the wheat, hoping to catch a glimpse of her lover somewhere. The world was all one flat, yellow circle under a blue cup. There was not a cloud in the sky, not a shadow on the sea of grain. Far off on the horizon danced a mirage lake, with green trees beside it. She could see its phantom ripples sparkling in the sun. Presently a grain elevator loomed up, apparently separated from its foundations by a strip of thin air. Another and another building quivered into view, and the automobile's hoarse horn warned the prairie-town of the major's approach. There was a crowd about the door of the small but proudly named hotel to

see him alight, but Beresford was nowhere to be seen.

The major ordered luncheon, but not for a moment did he take his eyes off Betty. The crimson car was safe in the street outside. Nobody in the town knew how to run it, and the major had not even considered it necessary to take out the safety-plug, but he was determined to run no risks with Betty. He had caught one glimpse of a hard-ridden horse that looked like Beresford's, and he did not propose to take any chances. He counted on reaching Fargo in time to take the evening train for the East, and he assured Betty that he would take care of her himself till he saw the steamer sail from New York. He hurried through luncheon, poor Betty dawdling in a vain effort to gain time. Surely Beresford would not fail her. Once the automobile had set off for Fargo, he could not possibly travel fast enough to overtake her, and the thought of the ocean between them was too dreadful to be considered.

The major led her to the waiting car. Her heart gave a leap of joy when she saw Beresford, on his horse beside it. The major merely cast a withering glance at him, and assisted Betty to the back seat.

"One moment, major," Beresford pleaded. "I want to say——"

"Get out of my path!" the major thundered, "or I'll run you down."

He threw the controller on with a jerk. The automobile gave a leap that almost unseated its occupants, and shot ahead at full speed. Beresford's thoroughbred sprang forward and galloped abreast. The major yelled in derision.

"Come on!" he shouted. "I'll run the legs off that horse in a minute!"

The alkali-pale road stretched away across the prairie like a white ribbon, without a break or a turn. The houses of the village flashed past. On dashed the car, the clean-limbed horse racing beside it. Beresford bent above his saddle, and called to Betty.

"It's now or never," he said. "Will

you stay or go? Quick, Betty, I can't keep up this pace much longer!"

"How can I stay?" Betty gasped. "He won't stop."

The major did not so much as deign to turn his head. Let Beresford ride till he dropped. The day was young, and the automobile hardly well under way. He grinned exultantly at his enemy. Beresford drove his spurs home, and his horse almost grazed the wheels. He dropped the bridle, and leaned from the saddle.

"Stand up, Betty!" he shouted. "Hold out your arms."

In a flash his right arm swept out and caught her. With scarcely an effort he lifted her, and swung her clear of the car. The major, looking over his shoulder, tugged frantically to shut off the controller. The automobile still shot ahead at full speed. Beresford, with Betty in his arms, reined in his horse.

"Good-bye, major," he shouted. "I kicked your safety-plug in for you. You'd better stop and take it out."

Stop! The major might as well have tried to stop the sun. His man-eater had the bit between its teeth, his sudden jerk in starting had "frozen" the "fingers" of the controller, and

the last resort, the safety-plug, was jammed past his power to release it. He pulled at the brake frantically, and the wheat shuddered at his language. Beresford gathered Betty closer in his arms, and bent his face to hers.

"Light of my eyes," he said, "it was sudden, but it had to be."

"He'll stop and come back," said Betty, fearfully.

"He can't stop till he runs down," Beresford answered. "I didn't have time for more than one good kick, but I aimed it all I knew. It was the only thing to be done. I couldn't let you go—I hope you'll forgive me."

"Forgive you!" said Betty. "I think you're splendid. Put me down, Dick. I know it's wicked, but I've just got to laugh at dad."

"Will he forgive me, do you think?" Beresford asked.

"He'll have to," laughed Betty. "He'll love you for this when he calms down, but I shouldn't care to be near him when he steps out of that machine."

Far down the prairie road a small, red object raced madly with the wind. Between the reaches of yellow wheat, two impenitent young people stood and watched it.



AT TWO A.M.

PASSIONATE LOVER—What can I accomplish, whither shall I go, to please you?

GIRL—Oh, anywhere, only go soon!



POSSESSED A GOOD HEAD

HE—I understand that she is a girl who holds fast to her ideals.

SHE—Yes. She is far too sensible to marry one of them.

THE SONG OF A SLAVE

TO HER MASTER

WITHIN the courtyard, master mine,
 Give me one little fountain glad,
 To be for joy when I repine—
 The sister that I never had;

To play with me, when you are far—
 To chatter in my native tongue—
 Yours is a high and distant star,
 Dear master, I am young!

One little fountain ever gay,
 To sing the song of vanished birds,
 To break the silence of the day
 When you forget to love in words.

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.



WHAT HE MUST COME TO

HE—I am free to confess that I have faults, Miss Alice, but—
 SHE—Yes, I know; but are you prepared to acknowledge that I have none?



WITH FAINT HEART

WITH ashen cheek and hollow eye,
 He lingered near her gate.
 I met him there, and said: "Old chap,
 You're looking ill of late."

He glanced up at her window,
 And said: "O friend of mine,
 I fear excessively that I'm
 Going in to a decline!"

CARROLL WATSON RANKIN.

A PAVILION ON THE SAND

By John Regnault Ellyson

*"For those who roam, I have wrought
a tapestry of life and hung it in the night,
under the stars—as a pavilion I have
set it upon the naked sand."*

IN four days more, or certainly in five, at most, it was promised that we should be sitting at ease in the cafés of Cairo. And how exceedingly grateful we were—how gratifying the prospect! For a long while, indeed, the cafés of Cairo had seemed as far off as the gates of paradise.

In the main, there were tedious, prosaic marches, now by day and now by night, leagues on leagues of weedless, barren ground, the same ever-unvaried horizons, the same unchanging skies. At the halting places, it is true, the gabble and bustle of the attendants, the supervision of our effects, the meals fairly well prepared, the exchange of ideas with the more social among the travelers, served to break the monotony and to put us in a better humor for relishing the welcome hours of repose that followed.

If the obese merchant of Tanta was whimsical enough in his notions and the most clumsy individual in our small caravan, Melissus, the Greek, was assuredly the most nimble and sprightly, and none the less amusing. Slim and graceful, he had a fine head, black, curling hair, eyes very restless and keen, a wide mouth and a blunt nose. He was pleasant and quick-witted, free in his manner—rather familiar, in fact, and extremely voluble. I was decidedly prejudiced against him, at first, on account of his freedom and garrulousness, but, before our journey was over, and afterward,

especially at Cairo, I had sufficient reason for amending my judgment and for considering him a thoroughly sympathetic, genial and splendid fellow.

There was yet another, however, more interesting than he—the young Italian, Chivigni. I speak of him as an Italian, and so his name indicated. While looking at him and listening to his phrases, it was impossible to think otherwise, though I am by no means confident that such conclusions were correct. He had the refined features belonging to the best of that people, and spoke the language with the purity of a Tuscan. But something in his manner at times, something Oriental rather than Italian in his ideas and methods of thought, made me waver whenever I attempted to settle this point in my mind.

He was remarkably handsome—one of the handsomest men I ever met. His countenance was all frankness, all charm. His large, deep, earnest eyes were like a woman's; and like a woman's, too, was the smile that often played about his lips—haunting and seductive. He was not merely apt and intelligent; he was very scholarly. Young as he was, he had traveled much, and, with the spirit of a true observer, he had closely studied characteristics and customs. His experiences were given with vivid life and fancy that made his conversation always delightful. He conversed readily in many tongues. He was skilled in the art of being pleasing in himself and in the art of reconciling the differences of others and of bringing together persons of widely opposite temperament. He saw through the

nature of Melissus at a glance, and discovered there the admirable qualities, the existence of which I latterly had the proof.

He was in delicate health when he joined us, and, during our long, rough journey, he did not improve. To his condition of ill-health—a condition even worse than we supposed—I attributed his fitful melancholy and his occasional moodiness. But, after brief periods of dull reserve and silence, he was more than ever affable and entertaining. All at once he seemed to gain what was lost but a moment before; color crept up through the bronze the sun had bestowed on his cheeks, and his eyes grew more alluring and brilliant.

Much of a favorite with all, he particularly won the sincere esteem of the merchant of Tanta, the Greek and myself.

We had continued moving on for several hours after sunset. The night was magnificent. The constellations twinkled. The moon rode high. The atmosphere was not only singularly pure, but singularly invigorating. The desert, unechoing and limitless, spread out like a vast field of silvery velvet. Under the charms of the night, I felt "indifferently good," as the old smoker of the East feels by the side of his enchanted pipe. I forgot what had so repeatedly been presented to my view—I forgot the gates of paradise, the cafés of Cairo. I gave myself over to the emotions drowsily excited, enjoying my impressions and listening to the clink and jingle of harness and tackle, the fall of the padded hoofs, the weird songs of the Arabs. Truly it was an incomparable night, a night full of uncommon magic, a night worthy of a drama of some sort, bright or somber. And the drama evolved.

We had halted at the spot favorable for our usual resting hours. Before any preparations were made, however, it was discovered that something most serious had happened. Chivigni was missing.

To render matters more perplexing and painful, little could be gleaned.

His animal had strayed from the line and, when found, was uninjured. There might have been foul play, but there was no evidence of it. The Badawi, on whom all blame fell, could offer no explanation—he was hopelessly stupefied.

Melissus, with amazement and anguish in his countenance, brought the news to me, and each word struck the quick like a jagged sword. It must be confessed that I, too, was stupefied—confounded.

It was the Greek and the merchant of Tanta who, alive to the needs of the occasion, showed their wit and their discretion. It was they who acted with promptness. They opened their purses, and procured the service of the most alert among the Arabs. I hastened to join them as soon as I fully realized what was being done. We formed ourselves into a little body of active and keen-eyed searchers, no less eager than resolute.

Equipments ready and plans arranged, we immediately set out, and with all speed, along the route we had but lately covered.

II

MEANWHILE, Chivigni found himself crouched on the ground. He was instinctively moving, struggling to rise. He was fevered and dazed. Gray mist hung before him. He had received no injury—at least, he felt no pain. But he was very much enfeebled; it was with difficulty that he rose from the position in which he had fallen.

When he gained his feet, he tottered. His temples burned. He pressed his palms across his brow, concealed his eyes and then unveiled them.

The gray mist became a white blaze. Like one suddenly awakened, he looked upon the world about him as part of a dream. The clear air was chill, though no winds blew. The sky was filled with stars. The moon shed glittering light on the waste of blond sand. Everywhere the great sea of the desert glimmered, and silence brooded.

The whiteness of the glare was most cruel, and the stillness of the night was as a burden at once invisible and intolerable. Coldness crept over Chivigni, as he sought for the animal on which he had ridden, for tokens of moving life, for traces of his companions. Nothing indicated the passing of the caravan that way. He was seized with tremors. He crushed his face between his hands; he reeled.

After the first moment of despair, he would again have persuaded himself that he slumbered, that he dreamed. It was impossible—impossible as an attempt at divining how his misfortune had occurred. He could remember no detail, however trivial or vague. His brain, as if under the pressure of a drawn band, swayed and throbbed—fever had set confusion there. He could see only the gleaming horror of the solitude, and then this grew dim. His strength failed utterly; he sank down in a swoon.

For a time, he remained unconscious. By-and-bye, a kind of sensation stole over him—the indefinable sensation that precedes or breaks up repose. There was a sense of motion—the slow, continuous motion that soothes and tranquilizes. It was the feeling of one lying in some pendulous web rocked by shadows. Soft lights floated before his unclosed eyes, and at his ear fell sounds like echoes, spiritual and infinitely sweet.

Often he had wished, often devoutly desired that, when death came, the coming might be in such form as this—so slumberous, so gracious. It was the boon he craved, the boon for which he prayed. There was now no dread or pang or anguish. Regrets and sorrows and memories were things that had gone by. The world seemed a vast cloud that had been folded. There was a new dawn, and the sounds awakened were the sounds of dawn. In his soul he thanked God, and waited.

But soon he was aware of an object near where he lay, a presence ethereal or human—a distinctive presence like that of a bridal nymph or a fragrant girl. On his brow he felt the stroke

of a caressing hand—on his brow, on his cheek, on his lips he felt the touch of fingers that thrilled as they passed. The murmurs at his ear fashioned themselves into accents, and he listened to words mystical in meaning, yet naive and delicious. They seemed scarcely spoken at all, but breathed into the air.

From the languor that was heavy upon him he roused himself. He opened his eyes, and beheld there at his side a creature of supreme loveliness, of strange grace. She was some rare child of the unknown, some daughter of the Orient clothed in a robe of dusky orange silk, girdled beneath the bosom with a woven scarf and bordered at its rim with jeweled threads. The warm-scented, loose waves of her dark hair, the flower of her face, the marvel of her melancholy eyes drew the blood through his veins, quickened the pulse of his heart.

He did not understand, nor did he seek to understand. His astonishment increased as he gazed, and rapture mingled with his sense of wonder. In the smiling features and in the splendor of her sad eyes, there was something profound and mysterious, something that haunted like remote, incomplete remembrance. At a time long since, somewhere in the earlier days of the past, he had caught glimpses of such beauty, but when these were first made manifest, or where or how, he could not tell.

He did not know, nor did he seek to know. But he knew and he understood now that he breathed, that the desert stretched about him, that he lay near a spring under the long shadow of a palm and that in the sky the moon yet lingered.

And he knew, too, that some one had come—one other than Death, though Death might be nigh—that one leaned over him with tenderness and solicitude and with love on her lips, and spoke, and that the tones of her voice went through his soul like the vibrations of a harp. He was charmed, lulled at once and stirred by the strangeness of her beauty, by the sound

of her voice, by the adorable passion of her words.

Slowly, murmuring the while in the manner of a mistress to her lover, she revived and gladdened and clung to him, brushed back the hair from his brow, passed her hand across his features and, bowing down, touched his lips with hers—warm lips more sweet and subtle and memorable than perfume or wine.

How all resembled the sorcery and the wildness of dreams, yet how palpable, how unmistakable, how real! The garments of the beautiful woman hung close about him; she had spoken; her lips had touched his; their hands had joined, and here by him were the unfathomable, dark, great eyes and the radiant face—here on the sanded plain, in the white luster from the sky, under the stars.

His spirits had kindled. As one breathes, he had gathered strength. There was no more weariness of limb, no more confusion of mind. Once, after he had risen, he thought he discerned dim forms in the distance, and heard calls of menace or warning, and once again, looking along the plain and listening, he could see beckoning shapes and hear calls that came louder. But he turned to his companion. She smiled, and took his hand, and even then the far noises died away, and the forms vanished.

"They have faded as the haze fades from a river."

"These are nothing," she said; "here we do not regard them."

"I give them no heed."

"Mere phantasms—they come and go. Sometimes they are fair, and sometimes they are sinister."

"I know there are strange things in strange lands——"

"And beings that are strange?" she asked, laughing.

"Beautiful, rare beings, whom we seek far and wide, and, finding, adore forever!"

"You are contented, but are you unwearyed now?"

"I am happy—the beating of your heart has made me strong."

"Then we may go—come, let us not linger!"

"And are there paths in the pale sand?"

"Many unseen. This—this is the way, where love leads——"

"Where love follows love."

And they passed on in the calm of the night. The silence was broken only by their mingled voices. Their souls questioned and answered each other as cadences in song.

They passed on through the white night, and still beyond—into paths that bloomed, under the foliage of a grove, into grounds as seemly as those of a garden.

They passed on until they neared the entrance of a stately, elegant mansion. To the right, on a level space, stood three men, tall and sinewy. They were grooming their black dromedaries, and singing a plaintive chant.

"It would seem that they have traveled," he said.

"Yes; they bring us supplies from Cairo."

Through the portals of the abode they came into a lighted court, around which cool, clear waters flowed in the azure, tile-paved channel. On the steps of the interior doorway sat a slave whose shoulder leaned heavily against the jamb, and whose head drooped on his breast—an old man dead to the world.

"Drowsy old Selim!" she whispered; "he who was once so wakeful, sleeps now at every turn. Let us tiptoe by; in his slumbers he meets again his sweet master and his loved ones."

They ascended the steps softly. The wide hall, stored on either side with divers-colored objects of art, opened into an apartment lying at the foot of another small, marble staircase.

The chamber which they entered was superbly adorned, and faintly perfumed. The great beams of the ceiling were carved and gilded, and the walls, inlaid with mosaic as far as one might reach, glowed above with closely-woven symbols and imagery in hues of amber and sapphire. There were many doors exquisitely paneled, deep

casements and graceful arches, pendant, chiseled lamps of crystal and metal and stone, giant vases of lacquerware and bronze, and curious figures in jade on broad, black pedestals.

"Were you so much amazed?" she asked.

"I paused, but did I tremble?"

"You have seen these things before?"

"I have seen them elsewhere. The chamber, the figures in green jade—perhaps—"

"Ah, you remember!"

"No, I am not yet quite sure. I feel that I have been leagues away—that I am here now with you alone, and that your dear soul is mine."

She smiled, and led him by the hand into an unveiled corner of the chamber—a beautiful alcove. The low couch near the wall was fair with silken trappings, and in front of the couch had been placed a little table of ebony filled with salvers of fresh fruit and flagons of wine.

There they sat and regaled themselves, and talked together in the noble language of their childhood. He told of his wayfarings through the world, of his ideals and his hopes, of love sought and of love found. She told of the prince, her father, who, enamoured of solitude, brought here, his idols and treasures, of the land from which they parted, of early and vivid memories, of love she awaited and of love that came.

Time went by stealthily. Outside, the Eastern sky flushed and the sun arose; within, the lamps paled before the first light of the morning.

"Look," she whispered, "the stars are gone and day is here!"

"Yes, I see, but I cannot tell why this so grieves me."

She caressed and cheered him and, taking up a flagon, poured therefrom some odorous cordial into a goblet which, after touching with her lips, she pressed to his. He drank.

"You have outwatched the night," she murmured, "and sleep is now your due—the balm of sleep that heals—the sleep of the inner fountains of the soul!"

The fumes of the draught mounted to his brain, and almost immediately he sank in the arms of his companion, among the pillows of the couch, seized with unconquerable languor.

For a long, long while, no sound reached him. No word or movement troubled or broke the calm—no turbulence of thought or of desire.

But, as the day lengthened and evening drew near, he became less tranquil. He moved, and sighed. He felt as if he were again on the barren plain, alone, abandoned; and yet, suddenly, he thought he heard pilgrims in the distance—priests or pilgrims intoning these syllables of an old Arab chant:

"For those who roam, I have wrought a tapestry of life and hung it in the night, under the stars—as a pavilion I have set it upon the naked sand."

It was then that he was aroused. He was still in the chamber—the chamber of his beloved, but she was not there. He bent his ear, and listened for the footfalls, for the voice of his companion—the sister of his soul.

In the apartment nothing had suffered change. He lay in a position in which he could see well-nigh every recess, every object. He recognized the articles, the ornaments. And through the open casement, he saw the slender, dark shafts of palm-trees and, between them and beyond, the gleaming surface of the level sand and the sun, like a round, barred shield of red flame, dipping behind the rim of the horizon.

In the brief twilight, the shadows of night stole quickly abroad. But no one came. He still listened, and it seemed incredible that no sound or voice or footfall could be heard. He wondered and breathed fitfully, and doubts of one kind and another arose, and unknown fears.

The fantastic lamps that had been burning in the chamber unheeded since morning now shed a mystery of light over the surroundings. The light, however, was neither more brilliant nor less nebulous. But the objects everywhere—the silken trappings of the couch on which he lay, the many, paneled doors, the giant vases, the idols

on the black pedestals, the coloring of the high walls and the carved and gilded beams of the ceiling—all bore a very unusual and very unreal appearance.

The profound silence, at length, grew ominous. He became conscious of a sense of loneliness, of isolation. He became more and more deeply agitated. He became oppressed with feelings of cruel alarm. Something that he had been considering for several moments, also, served to increase his ill-forebodings—a circumstance for which he could not intelligently account.

The section of the apartment—the whole of the wall, which was just in front of him and which the lamplight but feebly illumed, resembled the tarnished drop-scene of some theatre, or the encrusted tissue of its curtain. This wall or curtain appeared to be outwardly played upon by the sweep of noiseless wind. It vibrated slowly at intervals. The motion of it rocked his brain as does the motion of the sea. He could not rise, and so, with eyes fixed there and with hands thrust against his temples, he remained inactive.

In gazing constantly at the same point, he soon discovered that the dull-hued drapery grew less opaque and more vapory in character. Indeed, by straining his eyes, he could see objects through the quivering veil—distant objects that, moment after moment, became more and more clearly visible. He could see the moon's reflected luster, the keen stars; the remote, low, black, mystical horizon and intervening spaces of glittering sand.

Terrible thoughts beset him. In vain he renewed his effort—he could scarcely stir. The weight was yet upon his limbs, though at last he succeeded in raising the forepart of his body. He looked about him.

The same singular appearance was

everywhere observable. Some marvelous change was being effected—he knew not why or by what means. The entire fabric was resolving itself into air, and vanishing like the caprice of a night, like a pavilion builded by enchantment. The roof and the walls parted; things of rare beauty shifted here and there like shadows; the shadows melted like clouds, and the yellowish lamp-glow merged into white moonlight.

And then, outstretched and alone, Chivigni realized that he lay near a spring by the side of a palm under the stars.

III

It was here we found him, after a three hours' rigorous search admirably well planned and untiringly pursued. All traces of delirium were gone, and the fever had abated, but he was almost in a dying state. We gave him what ease we could, kneeling at his side. We bathed his face and moistened his lips with wine. We sought to warm his chilled veins, to revive his flickering pulse, and we succeeded in a measure for a time.

We questioned him, and his replies extremely embarrassed us. The story he told is the fantasy which I have dared to reproduce in an outline of my own, but largely in his phrases and turns of expression. He spoke as one speaks after a long swoon—very faintly, very slowly, frequently pausing; but he spoke clearly, with earnestness, and now and then with a sudden spiritual fervor. When he ceased speaking, he was visibly weaker. He closed his eyes, and we saw that the end was nigh.

Once again, and once only, he looked up and smiled and touched my hand, and then he died—died uttering strange words I could not comprehend, some few, sweet, wild, passionate words in an unknown tongue.



PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

By Draper Williamson

"HELLO! Is that 1732-A? Is this Mr. Draughton, the architect? . . . Mr. Draughton, this is Mrs. Rattlington Smith. . . . No, Mrs. Rattlington Smith—no, S-m-i-t-h. Yes. Mr. Draughton, Mr. Smith and I have just bought a lot, and are thinking of putting up a very modest little cottage, and could you come out here and talk it over with us? You know we want it just exactly like this house—What did you say? Why, 2031 Roosevelt avenue; it's our sister's house—Mrs. Singlarton. . . . Yes; when would it suit you? . . . Yes, indeed, that suits us exactly—No, not through. And—oh, very well. Good-bye, Mr. Draughton."

II

"Good evening, Mr. Draughton. So very kind of you to come all the way out, but indeed I could never have explained what we wanted unless I had this house to show you; I'm so stupid, I never can understand anything about a plan; it looks just like a design for a Persian rug or something new to me. Now, we want something old Colonial, just exactly like this house, and the same size, except that we would like one more story. . . . How wide is our lot? Twenty feet, three inches. . . . This house? Yes, this house is sixty feet—isn't it, John?—and we want ten great big columns in front—this has only six; and then we want a great big hall when you go in, with one of those dear, old-timey fireplaces that you can sit in one corner of, and noble high ceil-

ings— Oh, no, this hall isn't *half* big enough; I think it just *spoils* a house to have such a teeny, tiny hall. And then—just wait a minute—here it is—we want a dear, old, low dining-room, with great beams and bay-windows on all sides, like this. Yes, I cut it out of the *Woman's Weekly*. I think it's from a log cabin on Monkamunk Lake. And then we want a parlor like this photograph; isn't it a dear? Yes, it is from one of those old Italian palaces; but I never can remember which. Then, my husband's den; you know the rathskeller at The Silverstein? . . . Oh, *did* you? Then let me tell you how beautifully I think you did it—so rough and old looking; I always expect to see Columbus or William the Conqueror or somebody like them, sitting at those tables; everything seems a hundred years old. Well, my husband's den must be exactly like that. Then I want a dear little reception-room. That little gold chair, isn't it dear? It's one of my wedding presents, and I want my reception-room just in that style; but I want everything harmonious; not like the row of rooms at Johnamakers's Upholstery Department, to show off the different styles. . . . No, I think the kitchen and the pantry are just right, except that I want my kitchen twice as large; and I want a laundry, and a bigger servants' porch, and I want the kitchen to be cooler than this one. . . . Oh, don't you think so? Well, if you can't—but you will try, won't you? And then up-stairs; here are some bedrooms that I cut out of *The Cottage Comfortable*; aren't they just dear? Such a cute little fireplace, and

such a darling old four-poster bedstead. And aren't those little windows just too sweet for anything? I think that's all.

"Oh, I nearly forgot; we have just five thousand dollars to put in the house, and not one penny more, so you must keep it down that low. . . . Well, all right. . . . Oh, dreadful! I thought, of course, you could have the plans by to-morrow evening! Couldn't you get them done sooner, somehow? . . . Well, if you can't—but, you know, we're in a dreadful hurry. Good evening!"

III

"Is Mr. Draughton in? . . . Yes, we've come to bother you, Mr. Draughton. We got the plans, and we think they are just dear—that cute little shield you put up in one corner of the plans is too sweet for anything. But, oh, I'm so stupid, I can't understand them at all! I don't like the stairs here. . . . A fireplace! Do you know, I thought that was the front stairway! And what's this next the kitchen? . . . Why, I thought it was the kitchen, all the time! So stupid of me! The front looks different from my sister's house, somehow. . . . That's true, I didn't think about our lot being so much narrower. Now, we want this bedroom out here, and this bath-room so, and—but here are three sheets of things we want different, or something. . . . What! twelve thousand dollars! Oh, Mr. Draughton, you must cut it down! We couldn't possibly spend over five thousand. . . . No, we can't spare any of those rooms. We want it just like that, but you must cut it down somehow. Well, *please* try to. Oh, thank you. Good-bye!"

IV

"Good morning, Mr. Draughton. . . . Yes, but don't you know, we saw such a darling house yesterday at Flintcote. Yes, that's it; and we think we like it just a weeny better than sis-

ter's. Oh, if you could make us another sketch, we'd be so— That's true, the house is on a great big farm, and our lot so narrow. Well, you'll do the best you can, won't you? Good-bye!"

V

2031 ROOSEVELT AVENUE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

We think the new plans are just too cute for anything; but I saw this sweet little picture of a house in *The Circulator*, yesterday. It's the house where Tinkler used to send for 'butter when he was writing "Dinner-bell Ditties," and if you only just *could* make us another sketch, we would be so much obliged to you; and could you let us have it right soon?

Most sincerely,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

TUESDAY, JULY FOURTEENTH.

VI

2031 ROOSEVELT AVENUE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

We like the last plans so much. The house looks so low and quaint and Dutchy; but couldn't you put that porch that we had on the first house on this?—the one with the high Colonial columns, so stiff and imposing, you know? And can't we have it to-morrow, to show our cousin-in-law, who will be with us then?

Hastily,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

MONDAY, JULY TWENTIETH.

VII

"Is Mr. Draugh—? Oh, good morning, Mr. Draughton. . . . No, I just want to ask you one or two things, and it won't take me a second. My cousin-in-law says she wouldn't have a three-story house for anything, so couldn't you just work in those third-story rooms somewhere else? You know the Cottagehams' have wings on each side; couldn't we do—? Yes, that's true, they have all the land they want, and we have only that

miserable twenty feet. Are you sure there's no other way? . . . Why, she didn't like it because a three-story house always looks like a young ladies' boarding-school. . . . No, no one else said it. . . . Well, that's true, it's ours, not hers. I'm afraid you think I've been awfully silly, Mr. Draughton. Good afternoon!"

VIII

2031 ROOSEVELT AVENUE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

We think the first plans are the best, after all. So won't you please fix the specifications, and everything, and get bids just as soon as you possibly can? We want to give a Christmas house-party in the new house, and have already sent out the invitations.

Most sincerely,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

THURSDAY, AUGUST SIXTH.

IX

THE CAT-TAIL INN,

MALARIA LAKE, MAINE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

Those bids are simply *awful*! The lowest was twelve thousand dollars and sixteen cents; and you *know* we told you not to make it cost over five thousand. You must just make some new plans, and cut everything *right down* and get some other bids; and please do it *right away*—we are in such a hurry.

Hastily,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

AUGUST FIFTEENTH.

X

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH
COMPANY.

DATED Malaria Lake, Maine,

8—31—1903.

To George Post Draughton,

3307 Greenback Bldg.,

New Amsterdam, N. Y.

New bids received. Award contract lowest bidder old bids immediately.

T. RATTLINGTON SMITH.

XI

"Is this 1732-A? Mr. Draughton, that contractor is delaying dreadfully; he hasn't a single man at— Oh, Labor Day? How absurd! So annoying. Good-bye!"

XII

"WHY, good morning, Mr. Draughton. . . . Yes, isn't it? Mr. Draughton, I'm so glad I happened to see you, for I want to ask you about this kitchen. . . . Oh, I'm so afraid of ladders. No, indeed, you go up first. Oh, please do! Oh, I—no, don't touch me! Oh, those horrid workmen, I wish they wouldn't look! There! I'll never come up a ladder again. . . . The kitchen? What kitchen? Oh, yes! Why, it's entirely too big; I'll feel as if I were in a church or a theatre. . . . Yes, of course I said twice as big, but certainly I didn't mean a thousand miles. Oh, Mr. Draughton, it must be more than that! . . . Is it? Well, then I'm sure that man's tape-measure is wrong or something—it just can't be— Why, it spoils the whole house! I wish you had made it smaller. . . . No, I suppose there's nothing to do now, but it's just horrid. Good-bye."

XIII

2031 ROOSEVELT AVENUE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

The carpenter hasn't put any wooden floor in the cellar, and says he won't unless we pay him extra, because it isn't in the specifications. It's just too provoking! I thought *of course* you had put that in; my sister has one in her cellar, and you know I said we wanted the house *exactly* like hers. The whole house is just a botch; there's hardly a *single thing* in it the way I wanted it, and I just *know* it won't be finished in time for the house-party, and I don't know what to do.

Sincerely,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER EIGHTEENTH.

XIV

1616 SAMPSON PLACE.

MY DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

Can't you make one of our house-party, to-morrow, in our new home? We think the house is just a dear, and all our friends say it is the sweetest

thing they ever saw, and there isn't a single thing that we would have any different. I hope *so much* nothing will prevent your being with us.

Most sincerely,
BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

DECEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH.



ENSHRINED

"FOR that I may not wear my rose
Full-cherished on my breast,
I leave my rose upon the stalk,
At honor's high behest.

"For that I may not show my pearl
In orbèd moonlight fire,
I leave it gleaming, fair and far,
Unflawed by my desire.

"For that, through ban of cynic Fate,
My love may not be mine
In face of day, I go away,
And leave my saint in shrine."

Thus spake her love ere that he went;
The loved one bent her head,
And, shivering, "A shrine is cold
And desolate," she said.

MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS.



TOO MUCH TO EXPECT

FRIEND—I suppose parents should try to be companions to their children.
THE OLD MAN—Yes, but I could never go out every night with Jack, and come home at three in the morning.

LE GANT

Par Albert Boissière

QU'ON imagine, sur un corps maigre et tassé, une petite tête ridée et fûtée, avec des envolements de cheveux blancs gracieusement disposés et l'éclair malicieux de deux yeux restés très vifs; qu'on accorde à ce visage, sans l'illusion des fards minutieux et le pernicious mensonge d'une poudre de riz sans cesse renouvelée, un reste de fraîcheur déconcertante; qu'on donne à la personne ainsi imaginée une tournure presque alerte et comme en désaccord avec l'apparent outrage des ans: qu'on termine la restauration du chef-d'œuvre par des mains demeurées d'un galbe charmant, si remuantes et si éloquentes, et aussi par deux pieds incomparablement menus, toujours en mouvement sous la robe de soie puce, par vanité de se savoir menus autant que par orgueil de se juger incomparables; qu'on anime d'une voix frêle et spirituelle, et parfois, dirait-on, ironique, le personnage vieillot avec grâce et si charmant de ton passé: et l'on aura, dans sa ligne d'ensemble, le portrait à peu près véridique de la vieille demoiselle de Ressencourt que la jeune Mme de Morsanes appelait, avec une affection vraiment filiale, tante Bérénice.

Et, de fait, tante Bérénice méritait, jusqu'à l'excès, les prévenances dont on l'entourait; l'image classique de la vieille fille, acariâtre et pourvue de toutes les manies puériles ou insupportables, qu'on a accoutumé de propager, n'était point l'image qu'elle reflétait... Elle ne manifestait jamais nul regret de sa vie grise—probablement parce qu'elle l'avait choisie ainsi, elle-même, et que les circonstances ne la lui

avaient point imposée... Parce qu'elle n'avait jamais supporté le poids d'une grande peine ni le faix aussi lourd d'une trop grande joie, elle était d'un caractère égal et enjoué. Elle savait beaucoup plus de choses sur la vie qu'elle n'en voulait dire, et, lorsqu'il lui plaisait de causer de la vie, elle en causait avec beaucoup d'esprit, car elle n'était point prude et avait le trait rapide.

Dans le salon de Mme de Morsanes—pour Mme de Morsanes, restée toute jeune orpheline, la vieille fille, uniquement dévouée à l'éducation de sa nièce, avait été la vraie mère...—tante Bérénice semblait un portrait de famille descendu de son cadre pour sourire de plus près à la curiosité amicale des familiers. Et les familiers prenaient plaisir à ce sourire qu'elle avait conservé très doux et qui était comme le complément de son geste resté gracieux et menu, ou de sa conversation demeurée prime-sautière—car elle n'avait point sa pareille, lorsqu'elle voulait s'en donner la peine, pour renvoyer le mot ou, d'une chiquenaude spirituelle, refermer sa bonbonnière...

Ce soir-là, dans le salon de Mme de Morsanes, on causait entre intimes... Légère, papillotante, qu'elle effleurât le potin de la veille ou qu'elle décortiquât l'actualité d'un tour vif, la causerie virevoltait, imprévue, sautillant d'un sujet à l'autre, avec une désinvolture capricieuse... Mais, par des détours inopinés, c'était toujours, naturellement, entre jeunes hommes et jeunes femmes, vers le même point de conjonction qu'elle revenait, et c'est au côté sentimental et amoureux

du potin ou de l'actualité qu'elle s'arrêta, sinon avec le plus de persistance, avec, du moins, le plus d'intérêt... Et l'intérêt que prenait tante Bérénice à la causerie n'était pas moins soutenu que celui où les jeunes hommes s'appliquaient... Pour alimenter la conversation, l'ordre du jour enregistre toujours assez de scandales, et pour juger du scandale il se trouve toujours dans un salon, entre intimes, des gens portés à la plus extrême sévérité et d'autres gens, par antithèse, enclins aux excuses bienveillantes... Tante Bérénice, ce soir-là, avec son même sourire de portrait accueillant, écoutait le jugement sévère des uns et s'attentionnait aux arguments pleins d'atténuations qu'émettaient les autres; mais, à une certaine nuance de ce sourire, il était visible qu'elle se rangeait du côté de ceux-ci... Et elle formula, du fond de son fauteuil, avec sa petite voix grêle de cristal, la morale de ces papotages...

— Mes enfants, dit-elle, lorsqu'il s'agit de juger les sentiments qui font agir les autres... l'indulgence est la plus clairvoyante des vertus.

... Et comme Mme de Morsanes lui tendait, en souriant, sa tasse de guimauve, la petite vieille demoiselle de Ressencourt ajouta, avec un clin d'œil malicieux:

— Oui, oui, ma chérie; je sais bien ce que tu penses... Je te fais l'effet d'un aveugle qui voudrait discuter peinture ou d'un sourd qui se mêlerait de donner son avis sur Bach!...

— Le tour est charmant pour amener l'anecdote, dit Mme de Morsanes.

— Mais je n'ai point d'anecdote à conter, se récria la vieille demoiselle de Ressencourt, en toussetant, après la première gorgée de guimauve. Et elle ajouta, d'un ton guilleret, au milieu du silence déferant et curieux qui l'environnait... "Je suis une vieille fée... d'accord, ma mignonne; mais je suis une vieille fée qui n'a jamais fait de miracles, comme la princesse de féerie qui vous occupe et son diable de précepteur qui ne vous regarde pas." Les jeunes gens, portés à l'indulgence,

remerciaient déjà des yeux la petite vieille de sa boutade... "D'ailleurs, continua-t-elle, avec le même enjouement... il est bon de dire que je n'ai jamais eu de précepteur."

— Oh! ma tante! insinua Mme de Morsanes.

— Petite, tu t'effarouches inutilement! reprit tante Bérénice. Ce n'est pas une anecdote... c'est un souvenir... un souvenir d'enfance qui me revient à l'esprit.

— Dites! pria maintenant Mme de Morsanes. Votre mémoire est si fidèle!

— Heu! mon enfant, répliqua la vieille demoiselle avec une douce lassitude, ma mémoire est d'autant meilleure que ma vie est peu meublée. Je me rappelle, en effet, les moindres traits de notre existence, les plus minces détails de ma plus tendre enfance... Je vois même, comme s'ils étaient là, devant moi, les figurants de notre vie quotidienne... la bonne, une grosse fille de Bayeux, qui portait agréablement le costume du pays, avec la coiffe plate en lingerie, sur le serre-tête de velours noir... et qu'on appelait Berthe... et le chien de garde qui répondait au nom de César et dont la niche était à droite de la porte du jardin... sous un gros coudrier. Car ton grand-père était alors conseiller à la cour de Caen, ville plate, grise et ennuyeuse. J'avais dix ans... ta mère en avait huit et l'on nous avait donné la même institutrice.

Penchant sa tête flûtée, dans un enroulement des cheveux blancs, tante Bérénice donna une tape amicale sur la joue de sa nièce...

— Tu vois bien, ma chérie, que tu n'avais pas à t'effaroucher inutilement.

Puis, se réadressant à la compagnie:

— Mon institutrice, poursuivit-elle, était une vieille Anglaise, installée depuis longtemps dans la ville. Sorte de machine à devoirs, Miss Ketty passait pour une personne un peu déséquilibrée. Mais, dans une ville grise, plate et ennuyeuse... on ne choisit pas son précepteur; on le subit... Elle avait connu, affirmait-on, "en tout bien, tout honneur," lord Brummel, échoué

misérablement dans le faubourg de Vaucelles... et c'était en elle, avec son amour immodéré du gin et son observance scrupuleuse de la Bible, un culte soigneusement entretenu. Ce culte était une risée pour mon père qui la plaisantait. Miss Ketty n'entendait pas le plaisanterie. Elle gardait, affirmait-on encore — mais personne au monde ne s'en était assuré — comme une relique précieuse, sous globe, vous m'entendez, mes enfants?... un gant en peau de daim du célèbre dandy... Et ce gant était la tarte à la crème des taquineries dont on l'assaillait.. Miss Ketty méprisait les taquineries. Et si puissante en elle était sa religion du souvenir, que lorsqu'elle voulait m'encourager au travail — ma paresse était notoire et nous n'en étions encore qu'à la "première conjugaison" — elle me disait, avec gravité et aussi beaucoup d'émotion dans la voix :

— Mademoiselle... si vous conjuguez sans faute le verbe "aimer," je ferai

voir à vous le gant du célèbre lord Brummel.

La vieille demoiselle de Ressencourt se prit à tousser, en cet endroit de son récit... Attentif, l'auditoire restait en suspens, cependant que Mme de Mor-sanes lui souriait avec tendresse... Mais, soit que la toux, malgré deux ou trois gorgées de guimauve, l'empêchât de suivre le fil de son anecdote — soit qu'à la vérité elle n'eût point d'anecdote à conter, ainsi qu'elle l'avait pré-alablement assuré — soit encore que l'évocation de ce souvenir, dans sa vie si peu meublée, valût toutes les anecdotes plaisantes — tante Bérénice reposa sa tasse sur le guéridon et, avec une naïveté parfaite, si parfaite qu'elle frisait la plus délicieuse malice, elle termina, de sa petite voix de cristal fêlé... si usée... et qu'on disait, parfois, ironique :

— Eh bien ! mes amis ! je n'ai jamais vu, de ma vie, le gant en peau de daim du grand homme.



"JUST LIKE A WOMAN"

SHE was most fair, of beauty rare,
But, oh, her heart was lead.
I praised her charms, her graceful arms,
The poisoning of her head.
She was my gem, my diadem,
My rose without a thorn;
But though I praised, she coldly gazed,
And answered me with scorn.

But, when I made a great tirade
About her dearest friend,
And swore her face was commonplace,
She heard me to the end.
She vowed 'twas true, then tender grew,
And, with a grateful air,
Her head she pressed against my breast,
And loved me then and there.

ARTHUR MACY.

UNGUARDED GATES

A COMMON day, and a day of fret
 To trouble her heart to vain defying,
 As she leaned to the bitter-cold pane, and let
 Her sad eyes follow the long lane, lying
 Out to the end of the dim day, dying
 In uttermost distance, cold and thin,
 Where a broken wind went suddenly sighing:
But this was the day when Love came in.

A day of useless and vague regret,
 Of saddening earth with the sad sky vying,
 Which most should teach her not to forget,
 Which most should bring the revivifying
 Of other Winters that rose, undying,
 And broke her heart that they once had been,
 With old winds wailing, and cold lips crying:
But this was the day when Love came in.

With heart of longing, and eyes unwet
 Because of other eyes, swift espying,
 She turned from the bitter-cold pane, and met
 Scrawled words—too suddenly sweet for trying
 To sadden them by a vain denying
 Of the hovering Hope that waited to win,
 With white wings barely held down from flying:
But this was the day when Love came in.

ENVOY

He, dreaming, waits for her late replying,
 Her heart confesses its subtlest kin—
 Though never Time bring their lives' allying:
Yet sweet was the day when Love came in.

FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



AN UNEXPECTED DELAY

MRS. LAKESIDE—She married in haste.
 MRS. LA SALLE—And repented at leisure?
 "It seems so. She was fully a year in getting her divorce."

HIS CROWDED HOUR

By Bertha Runkle

“**M**ARY, here's a friend of mine. My sister, Mr. Gay.”

Miss Mary Carter turned her attention from the hackneys in the ring to the young man at her brother's side. A faint, lovely flush sprang to her face; a smile, that began in a lightening of the eyes, flitted to the curving corners of her mouth, to the dimples in her cheeks. Yet Mr. Gay was no long-lost lover. Miss Carter had exactly the same tremble of color, exactly the same smile, for the maid who woke her in the morning, for the family, cross at breakfast, for Lord Oldport, who was believed to have left his tight little island for her sake. It was just Mary's way.

Ted Carter strode off. Mary leaned her chinchilla muff on the rail of the box, a laugh in her eyes.

“Evidently, we're ordered to talk to each other.”

The man in the aisle below laughed back for sheer content.

“I hope you don't mind, Miss Carter. I'm very glad your brother's gone, but, honestly, I didn't tell him to go.”

Gracefully, without seeming to stare, Miss Carter had taken a thorough inventory of her interlocutor's appearance. “He's not so good-looking—” she made rapid notes—“not so good-looking as he seems. But he's so radiant—as if he were a daytime fire-fly.”

“But you're not one of the college fellows?” she thought aloud.

“Do I seem as young as that?” he asked, with laughing ruefulness. “I

met Ted abroad last Summer, and we came home together.”

“Oh, now I know! Ted's spoken of you, often. You're the man with the name!”

“The name?”

“Peregrine, isn't it?”

“It means a wanderer, doesn't it?”

“And are you?”

“By no means,” Mr. Peregrine Gay answered, gravely. “I've spent all my days in Jersey City, where my father conducts a glue industry.”

She looked at him now with real interest, though it was scarcely to be distinguished from her pretty and polite feigning. She did not remember ever having met a soul from Jersey City. Though so near, to her it was a very Nazareth. Could anything good come out of Jersey City—anything so well-dressed, well-spoken, well-looking as Mr. Peregrine Gay? He was distinctly good-looking, and, somehow, different. She leaned forward half an inch.

“If you were what your name says, I should ask you to relate your adventures.”

“To tell the history of my life? It's had no history—till to-day.”

“Oh—you're exhibiting?”

“I'm making an exhibition of myself, I suppose,” he owned, with a laugh. “Miss Carter, may I tell you a story?”

Her eyes answered.

“Once upon a time——”

“So long ago as that?”

“I thought it would sound more romantic to put it that way. But I can be as definite as you please. On

the sixteenth of last February, about twenty-five minutes after ten in the evening, a fellow was walking up Fifth avenue——"

"A fellow? But I thought this was to be romantic. Please make him a prince."

"I wish I could. But he *was* rather romantic, whatever we call him. Well, he was walking up Fifth avenue, when he found his way blocked by——"

"A great, scaly, green dragon?"

"No, he didn't get near enough to the princess, to encounter her dragon. His obstacle was a red-and-yellow awning. There was a dance going on at the other end of that awning, and he would have liked to go to it, but he couldn't, because he wasn't invited. So he stood a while among the policemen and loafers and shop-girls and rowdies that were watching the rich and great pass in. He was in disguise, of course, so that none of the crowd suspected he was a prince—nor did any one else, for that matter. Well, he stared at everybody—he didn't think much of the men, though—and he saw so many pretty girls in so many pretty cloaks that he was quite bewildered, and couldn't tell at all which one to choose, when suddenly—the princess came!

"Her cloak was white, and, of course, it was trimmed with ermine, but it didn't need that royal fur to tell him she was a true princess. She paused one minute by the opening of the awning, and met his eye and smiled."

"Mr. Gay, I didn't!" Miss Carter cried, and blushed for her own vehemence. "At least—you're describing my cloak."

"The princess smiled," Mr. Gay continued, tranquilly, "on the prince, and on two pasty little girls and a very dirty messenger-boy who were peering in at the arch of the awning. You didn't see them as individuals—they were just the populace, and, like a gracious sovereign lady, you smiled. You wouldn't have remembered one of them five minutes later—or eight months."

"I think you most polite to remember."

"Ah, you haven't heard all the tale," he cried, in his quick way, at once impetuous and shy. He was a little fearful, a little embarrassed, yet obviously enjoying himself very much. "I must tell you that the prince was so dazed by this lovely apparition that he hadn't the presence of mind to say to the man at the door that he was a reporter and demand of him the name of the lady in the white cloak. Instead, he walked away in a radiant dream, and it wasn't till next day that he asked himself how he was ever to see the princess again. You see, when one lives in Jersey City, and one's father makes glue, one's acquaintance doesn't number a single person who moves in royal circles. So he began to haunt the awnings, and the theatres, and the restaurants, till, at length, one Sunday afternoon, he saw her driving down the Avenue. By this time, he was perfectly desperate, so he ran after the carriage——"

Miss Carter opened her eyes.

"—on the sacred Avenue. Fortunately, there were, as usual, twice as many vehicles as the street had proper room for, the princess couldn't go very fast, and the prince could keep up without being thought a lunatic—though he was thought a boor, for he butted into, and trod on, perfectly inoffensive people from the Park to Murray Hill, where the princess dismissed her carriage. Then, after the door had swallowed her up, he rang the bell, and asked if Mr. Jones lived there. The man said, 'No, it was Mr. Seton Carter's house.'

"So then the prince knew who you were, and for the pure pleasure of seeing your name, he used to read the society-column just as if he belonged behind the ribbon-counter. While the opera lasted, he discovered that he could see you every Friday night, and he did. Then you went South and he lost you, and he despaired, when at last, one Spring day, the papers announced your approaching departure for England, on the *Paris*. He took passage on the *Paris*, being ingenuous enough to hope to meet you on the

voyage. But you traveled with royal exclusiveness, and never even glanced his way. Later, when he was staying at Claridge's, where he had arranged to sit at the next table——"

"At Claridge's?"

"Oh, my princess is a real princess—she never notices commoners. If her glance did chance to fall on the young man at the next table, she looked straight at him as if he weren't there, and his features were no more alive to her than the pattern of the wall-paper. Ah, don't think me criticizing—I'm praising. I want my princesses to be real princesses! If they can't, in this twentieth century, go round with lovely gold crowns on their heads, let them at least give me the pleasure of a royal air. Ah, you think I'm talking nonsense. I mean it, I assure you."

"What else happened at Claridge's?" she asked, with prim mouth and smiling eyes.

"He heard the royal family discussing the plans of the princess's brother, who had been intending a trip through Norway with a college chum. Chum hadn't turned up; brother decided to go alone. Then behold the wily prince taking the same steamer to Bergen; behold him becoming acquainted, becoming even intimate; returning to New York in the same cabin with brother. Behold him here."

They scanned each other, silently, gravely. Then the man smiled.

"Well?"

"I think," said the princess, "you should be presented to the queen-mother."

"I don't know how you manage it," Miss Carter said, thoughtfully, handing Peregrine Gay his tea. It was a snowy January Sunday, very pleasant by the drawing-room fire. Also, for a miracle, Mary was alone.

"Manage what?"

"Always to look so contented."

"But I feel so. Contented? I'm going to purr in another minute."

"I believe you are." The girl

laughed. "But I didn't mean at this moment, when you're enjoying—your tea. You *always* look as if you didn't know what it is to be bored."

"I don't—now."

"Haven't you a care in the world?"

He appeared to consider, carefully.

"Not that I remember, highness."

"Isn't there a single thing that worries you?"

"Not one single blessed thing!"

She leaned back in her chair behind the tea-table to survey him in smiling wonder.

"I believe it's true," she said, softly, half to herself. "It can't be true, but I believe it is."

"What surprises you, princess? Isn't everybody always happy in your glittering world?"

"Do you think they are? Don't you ever see them look bored?"

"Oh, yes, but I thought that was part of the game," he answered. "I thought it was Rule Forty-two that they must look bored at the opera and driving in the Park. You can't mean they really are bored?"

"I'm afraid they are."

Mr. Gay looked for an instant almost grave.

"What a blow to my illusions—if I believed it for one moment! But I know, princess, you're trying to impose upon me."

Her only answer was a little impatient sigh.

He sat beaming upon her, till, presently, in her silence, there came—against his will, as it seemed—something of seriousness to his merry eyes, hesitation to his tongue.

"Princess, it can't be that you have anything to trouble you?"

She became interested in the flame of the spirit-lamp.

"Oh, perhaps—one or two trifles."

"I don't see how you can," he answered, with conviction; "I don't see how you can."

"Oh, I'm mortal."

"Because," he went on; "to know how perfectly lovely you are must make you perfectly happy."

She did not look up, or speak. After a moment, he went on:

"I wouldn't for the world seem personal, but I do think you absolutely lovely. Your face, and your voice, and your hands, and your soft clothes that one wants to stroke, and your manner, so gracious and kind to every one—you know what people call you, 'the polite girl'—and your wonderful temper, never ruffled, always patient with bores like myself."

"Do you think me perfect?" she asked, still with bent head.

"I thought you that when first I saw you under the awning. But I knew you were—mortal, as you say. I was sometimes afraid, those months of waiting, that, when I knew you, I might find you not perfect. But you are. So that's why I brazenly avow that I'm perfectly happy."

Indeed, he appeared so, but Miss Carter would not look at him to acknowledge it. In a voice a little hard and abrupt, she said:

"One of my worries is Lord Oldport. Mother says he won't wait much longer."

Mr. Gay started. She glanced up quickly.

"Ah, you think it bad taste to refer to that."

"No, before the court fool one discusses everything," he answered; and, after a pause, "princess, if you permit Touchstone's opinion, I think, of course, you will marry Oldport."

She was watching him now, but her face was well-schooled, impossible to read.

"He's not your equal, but then no man on the round earth is that. This man is almost your equal in rank; he's a gentleman, wears an honorable name honorably, has political ambitions highly creditable to him and likely to bring him to a high place. In confidence, princess, you're thrown away in New York."

"And he's so pleasant and chatty!" the girl said.

Mr. Peregrine Gay chose to laugh.

"But that's quite the right line for

him. If I were an earl, I wouldn't talk, either."

"That seems unlikely."

"You think me garrulous? I dare say I am," the young man admitted, cheerfully ignoring a tang in her tone. "The society of the great goes to my head. But if I were a belted earl—he is belted, I hope? I don't know what it means, but I enjoy the sound of it—anyway, if I were one, I shouldn't exert myself to be agreeable or clever. What would be the use? If he were duller than a Presidential message, a lord's a lord for a' that. May I have another cup of tea, Miss Carter?"

"That dance of ours next month," she said, as she dropped the sugar into his cup—"I think I shall announce it then."

"Oh, are you really here?"

"I was unavoidably detained. May I have this dance, princess?"

"It was promised hours ago."

"Pardon, I didn't ask that. I asked if I might have it."

Something of his sunny effrontery was reflected in her own face, which had been but coldly turned to him.

"If you can take me away before Mr. Herrick sees—"

"Princess, I'm in horse-leech mood to-night," he told her, as they danced down the room. "Now I beg one minute with you, alone. Just one minute, to shake hands and say good-bye."

"Good-bye?"

"Won't you wish me a fortunate journey? Wasn't that what they used to say as the victim was lowered into the oubliette? I'm going to disappear, princess, drop out, cease to be. Just give me one moment to say my good-bye?"

"But I don't understand you! Well, here."

They waltzed through the conservatory door, and passed between Mr. Carter's orchids into the little fern-house beyond. Gay wiped the moisture from a pane of glass, and looked out into the street.

"All the carriages in New York. Your father's got a detective on the

grass-plot, watching for crooks. . . . How I shall remember this damp, warm smell."

"Oh, I don't understand you!" Mary cried again. "I don't believe you're human!"

"Princess," he was beginning, when she cut him short. It was the first time, he noted, while he was following the sense of her words with painful intentness, the first time he had ever heard her speak rapidly. That leisurely enunciation was so a part of her that it was hard to recognize this as Mary's speech.

"What are you?" she cried. "You frighten me! You're like a faun—an apparition. You come out of space, a stranger to everybody—no kin, no roots. You're always smiling and happy—no cares, no anxieties, no longings. We're all groaning under the harrow—every one of us but you. You've escaped the curse of Adam. And now you go, silent, unexplained as you came! I don't understand. I'm frightened. What are you?"

"I think," he said, with a deep breath, "I must say good-bye."

He was at the door, when the girl seized his wrist.

"You sha'n't go without a word! You sha'n't play with me!"

His face turned gray.

"Play with you!" At last he was meeting her eyes full soberly.

She insisted. "What are you?"

He slipped his hand from hers, and stepped back a pace, facing her squarely.

"I'm a thief!"

Her eyes looked a wild question.

"I ought not to have come here to-night. I ought to have dropped out without a word. But the flesh is weak. Now you must be told."

He closed the door leading to the larger conservatory. He noticed how the wet fern-fronds shone in the electric light, and thought again of the sweet, moist smell.

"I let you imagine my father a glue-king. He isn't; he's a superintendent in a factory, on thirty dollars a week. There are seven of us chil-

dren. Three are married, four live at home. We that live at home pay our board. They're a good sort of people, I suppose—I don't like any of them.

"I went through the high-school; then I was made errand-boy in the bank. I've been there ten years. I'm teller now. I was always a good boy, a cheerful worker. It seemed the chief—in fact, the only—end of man, to go to work as soon as he left school, to do his best for his employers, and help his family along. They put me on the rails, and gave me a little shove, and on I went, year after year, as smoothly as you please. I don't think I was unhappy. I didn't realize that there was anything different in the world—till I saw you.

"Of course, I knew there were rich people who led a life other than mine, but that was of no more concern to me than the habits of the Hindus. My sisters used to read in the papers about Mrs. Such-a-one's ball, but it didn't lessen their enjoyment of the oyster social. I was watching the guests going into the dance that night, just as one watches a scene on the stage. One hasn't any idea of climbing over the footlights and taking part. Then I saw you. And the whole big, painted pageant became real, and I knew what I was missing.

"I had never been happy in my life, princess, but my senses were too numb to know it. I had never felt a moment's joy—I didn't know there was such a thing as joy. Beauty didn't exist for me. Music, flowers, lights, food and wine, pretty women, soft carpets, all the ease and brightness of living—I'd never tasted them, I'd never known such things were. Then I saw your face, and it meant all that. 'The glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome.' D'you see?"

He had begun with a chastened air, proper to the confessional; but, as his story flowed, it moved him in the telling as it had moved him in the acting. His voice rang out with a gay defiance; he had anything but a penitent's mien.

"From that instant, I set myself to reach you—to be in your life. They gave me leave to go abroad. I might have managed second-cabin and third-rate lodging-houses, but, oh, Claridge's! I've paid my scot since I've mixed with the fabulously rich. I've helped myself out of the bank vaults. No, I haven't ruined the widow and the orphan; the directors will have to make up the loss out of their own pockets. Old Pharisees who sat patting their fat paunches and voting against granting me a 'raise' of five dollars at the end of my tenth year with the bank! They may have to go without entrées for a while—do 'em good.

"I've worked it rather well. Tomorrow's newspapers, commenting on the perverseness and short-sightedness of criminals, will observe that my ability, if directed in the channels of honesty, would have made me a bank-president. Rot! In the first place, it wouldn't; the man on a salary stays in the rut, grinding his life out, and seeing the director's stupid nephew pass him. And, if I ever did, by a lucky miracle, lift myself to business success, what am I? A worn-out, sleepless, middle-aged dyspeptic, reaching life's pleasures when he's too jaded to care—taking his first holiday when you're a grandmother! What's that against my crowded hour? I've got to pay for it, but, great God, it was worth it!

"I've covered my tracks carefully, princess. Nobody has breathed suspicion. I'm such a good young man! But to-morrow the semi-annual accounting comes, and to-night I slip on a steamer for South America. My name across the river is something very different from Peregrine Gay—that happy wanderer from the straight and narrow path. No one will ever connect your acquaintance with that

bank. The Carters will not figure as an adventurer's dupe. I've hurt nobody, and—my God, the fun I've had!"

The girl was still silent, motionless. He caught breath for his peroration.

"I was sorry when you made me tell you—sorry, not because I have any pride, but lest you feel yourself smirched that you've broken bread with a thief. But after all, I'm glad you know, because you might have thought me—human—and been—a little—sorry when I dropped out. And I don't want to bring you the faintest shadow of a grief. Now you'll be glad never to think of me again. But—though I'm a felon, princess, don't grudge me my great happiness! You've given me a royal year, just by existing. Let me thank you for being what you are—and go."

"Wait!" The voice was once more low, deliberate, sweet, Mary's own voice. "Kiss me, dear, before you go."

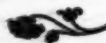
His face showed a wild fear.

"Mary! . . . My God—I said nobody was hurt! But if you suffer—oh, God, don't step out of the picture! You were an ideal, a dream, a star in the sky, nothing my miserable escapades could touch! Oh, princess, don't—care!"

For a moment their eyes held each other. Then, in one quick rush Peregrine kissed the girl's fingers, and dropped from the window.

He fell almost on the plain-clothesman. There was a grapple, a struggle, a shot.

"He grabbed for my pistol-pocket, sergeant, and me for his hand, and between us the damn gun went off. He looked up at me—I seen his face in the light from the window above—and he says, smiling-like: 'The force can always be depended on. Thank you, officer.'"



THE LITERATI

(WITH APOLOGIES TO MAETERLINCK)

By Theodosia Garrison

Seven Authors.

Three Poetesses.

A Wife.

One Husband—in evening dress.

A DRAWING-ROOM lighted with tall candles that cast a flickering, sickly light. The characters wander vaguely about the room, or stand in small groups. There is an incessant babble of conversation, in which the names of various magazines are constantly repeated. In the farthest corner of the room, THE HUSBAND is crouching behind a screen which partially conceals him. He is pallid, and wears the look of a hunted animal in hiding.

THE HUSBAND—Oh, oh! I have been here for three hours, and not one has gone yet. And they are still talking! If I could only understand, it would not be so terrible, but they speak a strange language. I have not seen my Wife for a long time. There is an Aztec playing the piano. I do not know what he is playing, but I am sure it is something terrible. That is what one gets for having a piano.

A POETESS—Oh, will no one listen to me? The Seven Authors are all speaking at once, and not one will listen to me? One would think they were all editors. Where is The Husband? Some one said there was a husband here. He would have to listen—that is what one marries for.

SECOND POETESS—Yes, yes, let us find him. I shall say a little sonnet to him that I wrote only this morning. When I have finished, he will be sur-

prised to find it is only fourteen lines long. He will have thought it much longer.

THIRD POETESS—Yes, yes, let us find him!

(They peer about the corners of the room.)

THE HUSBAND—The Seven Authors are still talking, but it is apparent that none believes the others to be speaking the truth. They are all telling strange stories of cheques they receive daily. I cannot understand why each repeats so many times that he has never had a manuscript rejected. They seem never to grow tired of saying it. One of them has his picture in a newspaper. He is showing it to everybody! One would think he was proud of having taken a patent medicine.

A POETESS—The Husband is there! Look, look! He is there in the corner!

THE HUSBAND—Oh, oh! they are coming! The Three Poetesses have seen me, and they are coming! Oh, how terrible they are! One would think, to see them, that he was looking into three convex mirrors. The Poetess with the ox-chain will get here first! She writes purple verse for pale people, and she is wearing a kimono! Oh, oh! One would think she was a comic opera. She is as terrible as a comic opera! Oh, oh, she is going to sit beside me!

THE POETESS—Why are you hiding here? No one can find you. One would think you were the North Pole. Do not look so wild. No one is going to hurt you. Listen, and I will tell you who all the people are, and what they have written.

THE HUSBAND—No, no! that is not necessary. They have already done that themselves—a great many times. Where is my Wife? She had no right to leave me here alone! I am beginning to hate her, and I do not dare leave this place to find her. Some one might ask me about the “oversoul,” and I do not know whether it is something to wear or not. Where is my Wife?

THE POETESS—Hush, do not shake so! One would think you were the Flatiron Building. Your Wife is talking to the Author by the punch-bowl. He pays no attention to her, whatever. He has been by the punch-bowl a long time. See how he stares into its depths. One would say he saw strange things there.

THE HUSBAND—If he does not leave it, he will see stranger things before morning. Oh, oh, what is going to happen now! Why is that woman standing on the divan? She is wearing an Alpine hat trimmed with little glass beads, and she has forgotten to take off her rubbers! Oh, oh, I know she is a genius. Oh, I am sure something terrible is going to happen!

THE POETESS—You are quite right—she is going to recite. No, no! Do not try to crawl under the table. One would think you were a dachshund. Listen! She is telling when she wrote this poem; she is telling why; she is telling on what paper she wrote it; she is telling the color of the ink. She is very wonderful! She writes only of the dead. She says her poem is about a little, burned child—

THE HUSBAND—Oh, I am not happy! I am not happy! Tell me, is there a window behind us here?

THE POETESS—Yes, yes! why should you ask such a thing?

THE HUSBAND—Oh, see! the Seven Authors are all talking again. They are speaking of money. They are telling what prices they receive. It is very strange that the one who speaks last always appears to receive the most! Oh, oh, they are putting out the candles! Why do they do that? One was unhappy enough, as it was!

THE POETESS—Hush! she is ready now to recite. She has taken off both her rubbers. She recites only in the dark. It is difficult for people to find their way out in the dark. What is the matter? Why do you groan like that? One would think you were a radiator on a Winter's morning. Listen! She is speaking of a moon—of a mildewed moon—

THE HUSBAND—Oh, oh, oh! I can stand it no longer—and my Wife will not go home! She will never be ready to go home. Oh, oh, the Poetess has finished. She is looking at me. Oh, oh, she is going to ask me what I think of her poem! If she were a man, I should not hesitate to tell her. Oh, I am afraid—I am terribly afraid! What is going to happen now?

THE POETESS—What is the matter? Why are your teeth chattering? One would think you wished to bite the piano. Listen, and I will say a little sonnet to you. I have written it myself, and sometimes I think I know what it is about. Oh, oh, oh, what are you doing? You are breaking the window! Oh, oh, he has climbed over the sill! He is reaching the fire-escape! Oh, he is jumping from one round to another! He is swinging by his hands! Oh, oh! it is like looking into the monkey-house!

A POETESS—What is it? What is the matter? Light the candles! One can never tell. Perhaps the refreshments are being passed!

THE POETESS—Oh, oh, who will listen to me now? The Husband has gone, and something tells me that he does not intend to come back. Oh, see, see! he is running down the street and screaming. Oh, he has leaped into the house on the corner—the house with the swinging-doors that do not touch the floor! One would think he was after something. Oh, oh, what is to be done now? The Purple Poetess has lost both her rubbers; the Seven Authors have drunk all the punch, and The Husband is gone! My God, my God, who will listen to me now!

CURTAIN.

THE "CHOW" COTERIE

By Lefa Field Hubbell

WHILE he was still at West Point, racking his brain in a languid endeavor to cram all the military knowledge possible into its limited capacity—for Wentworth was no prodigy—the thought of fighting fanatical Filipinos and living on fish and rice rather appealed to him. It smacked of adventure and privation, two things he had never known. But, when he got his commission, and rushed off to the Philippines, with saber drawn in righteous indignation, and settled down to the massacre of mosquitos and crocodiles and the annihilation of cholera and dengue fever, it did not strike him as being especially heroic.

There are degrees of heroism, of course—he admitted that; just as there are degrees of heat and cold, of sickness and of love. But he found that the heroism that exists in patient endeavor to pass away time is more of a tragedy than that born of the bugle-call to arms. Still, Wentworth had never considered himself a hero; he did not wish to be one. He wished nothing so much as to be a good soldier—when he left West Point. He scoffed at the ideal life of the "society man." For him there was war; there was his country's honor to uphold, and there were his country's enemies to fight. How vastly more glorious it would be to "hike" through impassable swamps, waist-deep in the quagmire of stagnant jungle-sloughs, than to dance like an idiot to the rhythmic strains of a string orchestra!

But "hiking" turned out to be anything but what he thought it would be, and he considered the gallant pursuit

of the enemy anything but glorifying. To be stretched out on the ground, a lodestone for every creeping thing that crawls, with his teeth chattering in chorus with the monkeys in the forest, while his temperature registered 104 degrees—and no government ice-plant within fifty miles—somehow did not very forcibly appeal to him just at the time as being particularly heroic. At least, he reflected, his friends back in the States would not think so. Oh, the glorious States! If he could only be back there again!

Wentworth loved babies and flowers and music and—girls. If he could only see one dear little American baby's face, and smell a violet, and feast his eyes on the matchless beauty of an American girl! The gorgeous, unscented blossoms of the tropics did not take his fancy, and he was simply sickened with the sight of dirty *buyo*-chewing, black-toothed, semi-savage Moros. He hardly dared remember how long it had been since he had seen any of the things he so craved just then. As a matter of fact, it was something over two years.

"Captain," he said, one day, to Captain Chalmers, when they had returned to the small, one-company post, after a long, fruitless tramp in pursuit of some Ma-Ranao Moros, "I think I'll quit the army."

The captain stared with wide-open eyes.

"Quit it!" he exclaimed. "Why, man, what are you talking about?"

"I was never cut out for a soldier," the lieutenant replied, irritably. "It is all very well to 'bone up,' and get through the Point with a commission

and a license to fight, and all that; but when a man hikes and hikes and hikes, and spends weeks on a trail without getting a Moro within range of his gun—why, there is no fun in that."

"Oh," the captain returned, with less sullenness than usual, but with the same leer in the corner of his mouth; "it is fun you are looking for, is it?"

"Yes, anything," the younger man replied. "But I could get along without the fun, if I could get a little excitement now and then, with some glory in it."

The captain gasped. What did the young fool call excitement? Didn't he call it exciting when he was lying on his back in the depths of the forest, surrounded by Moros on every side who were frantic with fanatical fervor to be at them; when the jungle air was so tense with danger that the snapping of a twig set hearts to beating furiously that had been stanch and fearless in many face-to-face encounters with the enemy? If he didn't call that exciting, what was it? That was as much excitement as he ever cared to have, and he was no novice on the battle-ground.

He looked the lieutenant over, and the lieutenant looked him over; then each scrutinized the other's face. The captain saw a boyish countenance which was aglow with the ambition of the impetuous youth who has not yet added a silver bar to the plain shoulder-straps that adorned his shoulders, but to whom a dozen silver bars—or iron bars, either—could offer but little resistance, if he set his mind and heart on finally attaining a star or two. He was a handsome fellow, but not much more than a boy, after all, the captain reflected, contemptuously.

The lieutenant saw a dark-visaged, coarse-looking, tall man, who appeared even larger in his khaki uniform than he would in any other attire. At a glance, one could tell that the captain was the epitome of selfishness and greed, and that he was the kind of man who sneered at others' capabilities or ambitions. He was bitter against everything and anything that

did not conduce directly to his advancement, and no one had ever heard him compliment any animate or inanimate thing. He prided himself on a great contempt for women; why, no one knew, though it was supposed that he had been disappointed in some love-affair. He disliked everything with a displeasure which was caused by a failure to understand, or an inability to see, any good or any beauty in anything that lives—except food. To him, all harmony was discord; all life, a dirge. The breath of a rose was noxious, and the face of a child was full of deceit and sorrow.

Lieutenant Wentworth lived with the captain because there was no place else to live, except with the doctor; but the doctor's house was very small and had not the conveniences of the captain's. Usually, when two men live together and isolate themselves from the body of moving humanity about them, they lose their individualities, and each borrows something from the other; each is governed as much by his companion's code of ethics as by his own, and his principles unconsciously adjust themselves to his friend's. But it was not so with Captain Chalmers and Lieutenant Wentworth. Each retained his personality, his own code of morals, his characteristic manner of speech and gesture. Wentworth tolerated the captain because the captain was his superior officer, and he had to. The captain tolerated the lieutenant also because he had to, though he had a personal resentment against the younger man for having come from West Point and from a military family; whereas he himself had been commissioned from civil life.

"What could you do if you left the army?" the captain said, patronizingly. "You can't do anything else, can you? The Point is all right for a military career, but it doesn't give one a very generous qualification for a civil life. What could you do?"

"Oh, rot!" the lieutenant said, airily. "A Wentworth doesn't have

to be trained to do things—he pitches in and does them."

"But he doesn't think hiking is worth his while?" the captain sneered.

"Not when he can't get what he is after. Not when he gets dengue, and malaria, and cholera, when he does start out to do something that is worth while." He stopped, abruptly, and listened. "What's that?" he asked, waiting for a repetition of the sound; "it must be a boat in. Wasn't that a whistle?"

"Sounded like it," the captain returned, shortly. "I believe the *Seward* is due, with mail." He picked up a paper—dated three months earlier!—and began to read about the "recent" political squabble in his old home.

Lieutenant Wentworth leaned back on his squeaking army cot, and yawned, with his hands locked under his head.

"Well, I might as well get down and see if there is any mail," he said, after half an hour of gazing at the *salangi* ceiling of the little *nipa* shack; and he sat up, listlessly, and cast a casual glance through the window down the long, narrow street that led to the sea.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet with military swiftness, and riveting his gaze upon some object far down the street. "Captain, there is a—a woman!"

"A what?" the captain asked, without looking up. It was impossible to surprise him; there simply was not a grain of surprise in him.

"An American woman!" the lieutenant cried, incredulously. "If it isn't, I'll eat my hat."

"Pish, man! you are dreaming!" Still, he did not glance up.

Wentworth kept on staring, while the "American woman" came slowly up the street, looking with interest at the dirty naked little Moro children as they squatted on their haunches and played *dukkos*, and smiling at their curious scrutiny as they surveyed her clothes, her steel-bead *châtelaine*, her dainty, white-shod feet. She was, undeniably, an American woman—a girl, Wentworth saw, upon closer inspec-

tion, and an exceptionally attractive one. But, if she had been the personification of all that was ugly and repulsive, he would have thought her pretty at that moment.

"Think of going back to the States," he soliloquized, "and seeing the streets full of—crowded—with those things! It is a real, live American woman. Great heavens, captain!" he blurted out, unable to control his emotions any longer, "come here and see this! Do you come from a country where such women live, and not care a rap whether you ever see one again, or not? Are you dead?" He turned around, and glared at him.

The captain pretended not to be curious, but, as Wentworth turned quickly, he caught the captain's eyes leveled down the street.

"I'm off," Wentworth exclaimed, snatching his khaki coat and campaign hat from a reed stool beside the cot, and dashing out of the house. He rushed out of the back door, made a circuit of a small cluster of native buildings and some banana-trees, and met her face to face.

In the Philippines, all Americans are kindred. She stopped him.

"Can you tell me where I can find the commanding officer?" she asked, in a sweet, girlish voice.

Wentworth nearly fainted, but he managed to reply, through his confusion: "I can take you to him;" and he wondered what the captain would say, and what she wanted of him.

"I have a letter to him," she explained, "from Major Hough, of the 1st Cavalry, in whose post in Luzon I have been stationed for the past year, in the educational department. Major Hough told me he would help me to get located."

"Great heavens!" the lieutenant exclaimed, unable to restrain himself, "did they send you down here to teach school?"

"Yes," she answered, quietly; "why not?"

"Doesn't the department at Manila know that this is no place for a young

girl to be alone? Besides, the Moros of this section won't need to be taught things for years, except with Mausers and service guns."

"I suppose not," she replied, simply, as they walked together toward the captain's house. "They ordered me here to teach, so I suppose I'll have to. There seem to be plenty of children here."

"Yes, but I am afraid you will find them almost beyond repair; they are incorrigible little imps. We have been trying to civilize their fathers for two years, and have succeeded only in intimidating them. You might try to teach them the higher mathematics of making two races one, since they have become our 'little brown brothers,' as the papers back home refer to them. I wish they could see them."

"It would be interesting, wouldn't it?" she agreed, laughing deliciously. "But I think the first thing for me to do is to find some place to stay. I rather expected to be able to get accommodations at the *presidente's*, but I don't seem to be able to find him. I couldn't make these people understand either Spanish or Tagalog."

Wentworth laughed, boyishly, and said: "I have lived here two years, and have never yet heard of the town's having a *presidente*. It is Moro, you know, and supposedly under the dominion of Datto Amaru; that is, the Moro part of it—we have martial law."

"Oh!" she said, helplessly, and her brow contracted with adorable perplexity. She stopped, and looked down the street. "What is that big building over there? It seems to be large enough to have all kinds of rooms in it."

"That is the company's barracks."

"And the one across the way?"

"The commissary and quartermaster's stores."

"Well, what is that blue-and-white building—the real one, I mean, with the board sides and *nipa* roof?"

"That is the military headquarters and telegraph office."

She was thoughtful for a moment.

Wentworth was so fascinated with her fresh young face and mellow voice that he was all impatience for her to speak again. She glanced up and caught his eye, and laughed.

"I am quite a monstrosity, am I not?" she asked, amused.

Wentworth had the sense to apologize and the grace to blush. Yes, he actually blushed, but she did not see that. Presently, she suggested:

"Couldn't I borrow a tent? Perhaps your quartermaster would let me have one."

"A tent! With the Moros shooting into camp every night? Hardly. But wait a minute," he added, quickly, with a characteristic gesture of detention. "I know of a place, if you do not mind living alone; of course, it would be infinitely better than living with Filipinos and Moros. The house is near the officers' quarters—that is, the officers' tents—so you would not need to be afraid of belligerent natives."

"Oh, as for that," she assured him, "I should not be afraid. Indeed, I doubt if the Moros are worse than the Igorrotes, or the Negritos, or other tribes of Luzon. But do you think you can get the place? Is there no one living in it? And if there is not, and it is a decent place, why aren't officers living in it instead of in tents?"

"Oh—why—well, they have been, you know, but there are only three of us; and—I'll take you over there to that seat in the plaza; and, if you don't mind waiting there for me, I can go and see if the place is for rent," he ended, lamely.

"You might tell me where the commanding officer lives, or take me to him, and I could wait for you there."

"Afterward will do for that. We'd better see about the house first."

"Why cannot I go with you to the house, and see the people myself?" she queried.

"No," Wentworth insisted. "I may have to run all over the place to find people. It will be better for you to wait there."

Grace let him take her to the long,

bamboo seat, where she sat down dutifully, and waited.

Wentworth made a Chesterfieldian bow, and dashed off—around the little cluster of native shacks and the little clump of banana-trees. The circuit brought him again at his and Captain Chalmers's quarters.

"Captain," he announced, breathlessly, "we've got to move."

"Move!" the captain echoed, wondering if the man had gone mad. "What is the matter with you?—has she turned your head?"

"We've got to move, I tell you!" he repeated—to his superior officer. "That girl hasn't any place to go. There isn't any place in town to take her to, except off the reservation, down in the native quarter; and it is too dangerous there. She has got to have some place to go to."

"Give her a tent," the captain said, brutally. "Who is she, anyway? What does she want down here?"

"She belongs to the educational department—"

"Why didn't they keep her? I didn't send for any educational department people; and I'm running this post."

"Well, they have sent her here, and she is here. Besides, she has a letter to you."

"Asking me to move out, I suppose, and turn my quarters over to her?" he snarled, with a disagreeable curl of the lips.

"I don't think so," the lieutenant replied, with trenchant irritation. "I did not see it, but she told me she had. Look here, captain, we are two men, you and I. Great Scott, man, haven't you any chivalry in your heart? Would you let a young girl like that live in a tent, or have to go among the Moros to seek refuge?" He shuddered, careless of the captain's rank or any consequences that might arise from his words; he would have braved a court-martial gladly.

"Why should I give up my house to a woman? She hasn't any right to be here if she is not willing to put up with conditions as she finds them.

She wouldn't be the only school-teacher in the Philippines who is living in a tent, and glad to get it, too. She is probably one of those timid little things we read about, and will give us more trouble than all the Moros in the island put together."

"I'll ask the *medico*," Wentworth said to himself, hotly; "he is a gentleman, anyway. He hasn't anything like such a decent house, but he'd give it up if he was on his death-bed." And he rushed from the captain's presence with frowning brows and darkly vengeful thoughts.

The *medico* was so taken by surprise at the news of the late arrival, that he stopped blowing clouds of smoke at his bob-tailed pet lizard, and nearly choked in an endeavor to swallow a mouthful of the smoke. Give up his house to her? Why, he would give up his life, his—his— There was nothing he could think of he would not give up to her, or any other woman. In a moment's time he was stuffing his belongings into a box, and ordering his *muchacho* to take them away some place.

"*Donde?*" the *muchacho* wailed, in the excitement.

"Oh, any place," the doctor told him. "Dump them out on the corner; I'll attend to that, later."

He mopped his face with a grimy handkerchief, pulled on his coat, slapped his hat on his head, and evacuated the premises—by way of the back door; it would never do to let her see him in those soiled and wilted clothes.

Wentworth rushed back to Miss Grif-fith.

"I succeeded in getting the place," he told her.

Grace looked up. She had been intent upon watching an army of little red ants maneuver around a vanquished enemy and carry him off piece-meal.

"You did?" she asked, with a peculiar inflection. "Yes, I thought you would. I watched you; you went around there"—she indicated the little cluster of trees and native buildings—"and came back presently to that house over there, on this side. You

stayed there a few minutes; then you went to the house next door. I saw you hurrying about and moving your things out. Now, that is not fair, and I won't have the place if I have to deprive you of it."

Wentworth opened his eyes in innocent surprise and denial, as though the thought had never occurred to him.

"No," he said, reassuringly; "we had some quartermaster things stored in there; I never lived in the house in my life."

She rose, and they went together down the street.

Heavens! he had not thought of it before—what under the sun would the girl get to eat, and where, and how? He would not dare ask her into the officers' mess. It was really the captain's mess, and he and the doctor had been asked to join it only because there was no other cook to be had in the town. The captain was using a "striker" from the company, and Wentworth knew that the captain would never consent to have the girl in his mess, anyway. Cold perspiration oozed out of his forehead, and fell in great, brown spots on his khaki coat.

"About your things, and lunch—" he ventured. "I can have my *muchacho* bring your stuff up from the wharf, and——"

"Thank you so much; but I brought a boy with me. He is down on the wharf, guarding my things. I have a ship-load, almost." She laughed at the thought of her piles of boxes. "And as for the *chow*, why, don't bother about that. I can rake up a little tiffin in no time. I never think of going any place without my chafing-dish, and I brought enough canned things from Manila to last me six months or more. I have cases and cases of them. I was warned about the place, you see."

Wentworth heaved a sigh of relief; but he felt a queer little griping pain in his stomach, and his mouth watered at the mere mention of a chafing-dish. He wondered if he should ever be invited to partake of some of her chafing-

dish tiffins. Just the thought of it made him hungry.

He left her in the little, two-roomed *nipa* house, which was set high up off the ground, on bamboo stilts, and she soon became lost in plans of arrangement for her things; where she should put her Igorrote shields, her Negrito knives, her Tinguian idols, and where certain *petates* would be most effective and certain fables most convenient.

Grace was of that type of American girl which attracts every one, the influence of whose personality flows around her like a peaceful sea rippling in the sunshine. Yet she was not beautiful, except in the *ensemble* of dark-violet eyes, black lashes, auburn hair, and two dimples which were the will-o'-the-wisps of her smiles. And the way she carried herself—so gracefully, so Gibson-like—would attract the least esthetic observer.

If the lieutenant and the doctor had been lonely before Grace came, they were "making up" for it now. They were like two children vying with each other for attention from a much-admired, but of course unattainable, personage. On her centre-table would be a bunch of scarlet hibiscus from one, and on her little dining-table a pot of ferns or a jar of ylang-ylang blossoms from the other. But she showed no preference for either of them, and neither of them seemed to expect that she should. She adored them both, with the big, tender, sincere heart of gold of a girl who has always had somebody to love and care for. She took the kindest interest in everything they did, and brought happiness into their lives as naturally and unaffectedly as the sun brings light into darkness. Her school-hours were short, and after they were over, the rest of the day was monopolized by the two officers. These hours were golden, glorious, and the little reed chairs beneath the canopy of cocoa-palms in front of her house were the favorite resort of the trio. The evenings were no longer endless and tiresome, but splendid—full of games and merry voices, reading sometimes, and always

chattering. On Sundays they would take long walks out into the forest between the post and the first outpost, and return with their arms laden with wonderful orchids and rare ferns.

Captain Chalmers refused point-blank to call on the school-teacher. He held himself most painfully aloof from what he called "the gang of idiots." He never dreamed that the day would soon be upon him when he would wish he were one of the "idiots."

It was just at this time that, like a vapor of poisonous gas that consumes all in its path, cholera came to the post, and the school had to be closed. The first day, only one person died—a Moro fisherman. The next day there were seven deaths; the next, twenty; and so it kept on increasing from day to day, until the death rate was alarming. The dreadful disease decimated the native village, and it was hard to find a Moro dwelling that was not adorned with a little yellow flag which flapped warningly in the breeze.

The soldiers were quarantined in their barracks, and a rigid guard placed over them. The streets were deserted, except for a few native mongrel dogs that went about with scared, starved faces and sluggish steps; even the chattering of the monkeys was stilled. The Moros wore *anting-anting* charms, and sent little boats bedecked with bright-colored banners and a profusion of flowers and prayers—Arabic scrawls on slips of paper—to float out to sea with the tide.

Those were terrible days, when every drop of water used was doubly distilled by the Government ice-plant, and every mouthful of food eaten was taken from hermetically sealed cans; when any person seen having communication with the natives was clapped in the guard-house; when people drank listerine, and put mysterious drops of liquid in everything they ate, and wiped their lips often with a handkerchief saturated with a disinfectant; when they boiled even their bathing-water, and put quantities of carbolic acid in the water their floors were wiped up with; when serv-

ants were watched like criminals, and it was as much as one of their lives was worth to leave his master's premises.

One day the inevitable happened—cholera among the soldiers. A handsome young Kansan was seized with the malady, and in two hours they were lowering his flag-draped body in the ground, and pouring quick-lime over it. The next day, Captain Chalmers's "striker" was preparing breakfast, when he gave a cry of intense agony, and lurched forward across the table. He was taken to the improvised hospital—and, what was of even greater importance to the captain, breakfast was left uncooked.

However, Lieutenant Wentworth went out and mixed something together which he christened "pancakes," and brewed something which he declared was coffee; so the captain and the doctor managed to get along, although the doctor had too keen an eye for consequences to touch the "pancakes."

They went without luncheon. There was almost nothing in the post to be had, indeed. No Moro was allowed to come into the town from the outside with chickens or eggs or *commotes*, and what few there were inside could not feed themselves, much less part with any of their food to the military. No supply boat had been near the place for a month, and would not be for at least two weeks longer, and the commissary was divested of everything except dried beans and some bacon and several cases of evaporated cream. The officers had been living on field rations for days, unable to get anything else. They couldn't have fish, because fish are the most dangerous things to eat—fish and fresh vegetables and fruit—during an epidemic of cholera. Plainly, there was nothing to do but eat beans and drink milk, or sit down and calmly starve.

Captain Chalmers stormed and tore his hair, for if he had any passion at all it was for good food. Going without his luncheon did not put him in any too good humor, but the worst of

it was, there were absolutely no prospects whatever of getting any dinner or anything else. Of course, there was flour in the commissary, and there were sugar and coffee and plenty of hard-tack and salt; but these might have been so many stones, so far as the captain was concerned.

He waited and waited, thinking that when the lieutenant and the doctor turned up they would certainly scrape something eatable together which would at least lessen his pangs of hunger. And then, upon becoming too impatient to wait longer, he went to the window, and looked across into his neighbor's, and saw the merry trio that sat around a little table, whereon a chafing-dish, with something creamy and smooth and steaming, and a platter of crisp brown toast, and some fried—fried—what was it? Why, it looked like fried oysters! And to one side, as though it had been set apart for another course, were a jar of the most tempting jam and a delicious layer-cake!

He gulped down something almost like a sob of hungry longing, and went into his poor, frugal kitchen. He found a half of a can of sardines and a tin box of commissary hard-tack which the ants had taken by assault. It was maddening. He simply had not the courage to go back into that other room and look across at the festive board. He took a book out into the kitchen, and sat down deliberately to ignore "the gang of idiots." "Of course," he said, furiously, to himself, "they are just having a good laugh at me, the fools."

When two of the "fools" came home that night—the doctor was sharing Wentworth's room now—they expressed their sympathy for the captain, and proceeded to elaborate upon the abundance and excellence of their fare. The captain gnashed his teeth, arose, gave a vicious kick at his chair, and left the room, slamming the frail door behind him so fiercely that there was danger of demolishing it.

The next morning, he went out into the kitchen early, hunger having kept

him from sleeping until his usual hour in the morning. The stove was guiltless of any intention of heated animation, and the captain waited with ill-concealed impatience for his brother officers to get up and commence operations.

The lieutenant came strolling out, in his kimono, about seven o'clock, and proceeded to take his matutinal shower-bath, in the little *nipa*-screened room just off the kitchen. When he had finished, the doctor followed suit. The captain waited.

The lieutenant was dressed first—as immaculate and contented as a Sybarite. He did not look very much as if he had any intention of pitching in and making coffee and cooking "pancakes," the captain reflected, on the point of asking him for instructions to do it himself. Perhaps the lieutenant was waiting for the doctor to do it; he had done it the day before, so it was only fair that the doctor should do it that morning. Presently, the doctor came out, as spick and span and crisply clean as the lieutenant. They both picked up their white caps, and started for the door, when Captain Chalmers gasped:

"You are not going out without a cup of coffee?"

"We are boarding with Miss Griffith during the cholera," Wentworth explained, nonchalantly, and added, tantalizingly: "She promised us some hot rolls and some fat, juicy sausages with our coffee this morning. I never ate anything like the dinner she gave us last night." And they went out, laughing.

The captain's face was positively black, and he sputtered something about their "thinking they were smart," and crushed a newspaper fiercely in his hand, preparatory to starting a fire in the kitchen stove. He filled the little hopper of the coffee-mill full of grains of the berry, and sat down, like a child, with the mill between his great knees, and turned the crank with a hand trembling with resentment and weak from hunger. He threw the ground coffee into the pot,

covered it with water, removed the stove lid, and placed the pot on the coals; he was too hungry to wait for the stove to get hot. Then he took the ant-eaten hard-tack, and spread it out in the sun in the window, and, when the ants were all gone, threw two or three pieces in the oven to "freshen it up." When his coffee became warm, he poured it out into an enameled tin cup, broke some of the hard-tack into it, and tried to make a breakfast of it. It was really a brave thing to do.

Then he thought, and after he had thought for a while he went over to the company's barracks, and asked for a man who would volunteer to cook for him. No one responded; no one knew how to cook.

Frantic, he went back to his home, and waited for the two "fools." Neither of them came in until time to wash for tiffin. Wentworth came sauntering in first.

"Wentworth," the captain said, "where did that girl get all her *chow*?" He was O. D. that day, and with his khaki clothes and campaign hat he looked so big and strong and masterful that it was difficult to realize the poor man was actually hungry.

"Cooked it herself," Wentworth answered, laconically.

"But where did she get the—the sausages—and the jam and the—oysters?"

"Brought them with her," the lieutenant replied. So the captain had been peeping!

"How much has she got on hand?" the captain asked, presently.

"Oh, lots. She's got a corner in *chow* in this post."

"You don't think she'd care to—to sell some of it, do you?"

"No, indeed; she has already given the doctor a quantity of delicacies for the hospital. She wouldn't care to dispose of any more."

"But what am I going to do?" the captain blurted out, in desperation. "Why, I'm nearly starved, Wentworth!"

Wentworth was cruel, of course; but he grinned, and said: "You haven't

any right to be in the army, captain, if you are not willing to put up with the conditions as you find them, and take what you can get. I believe that is the comment you made when I proposed giving her your house. Besides, I wouldn't ask her to run the risk of getting out of *chow* herself, though there doesn't seem to be much danger of it now; we certainly live well."

"You wouldn't ask her," the captain flung back at him. "You don't have to; I'll see her myself—she wouldn't begrudge the commanding officer something to eat."

"Oh, no, she wouldn't begrudge you anything; but, you see, though you may be commanding officer of the post, she happens to have promised me I might be commanding officer in her house for the rest of my life; and I think you have treated her too shabbily to deserve anything to eat, myself. However——"

The captain was furious. "She can keep her trash *chow*," he said, his eyes fairly blazing with wrath, and he glared at the lieutenant; "and you can just tell her I said so, too. Do you hear? I wouldn't eat a mouthful of anything she has in her house, or ever *did* have in her house, or ever *will* have in her house, if I was starving—actually starving!" He paced the floor, and stopped short, whirling on his heel, as some one knocked at the door. "Come in," he cried. "What do you want? *Cosa*?"

Grace's *muchacho* stood in the door, carrying a tray. The tray was covered with a daintily embroidered linen cloth, and on the cloth were several dainty china dishes. One of the dishes contained a beautiful—so the captain thought it—piece of brown toast heaped high with delicious creamed oysters; another contained a dozen stalks of snow-white asparagus dipped in mayonnaise; and still another was filled with native *commotes*, mashed and whipped to a light, creamy substance, and surmounted by a small piece of butter which was melting and running down the sides in little streams. A generous quarter of a good-sized

pie—apple-pie, too; his favorite—reposed there peacefully, and from under the edge of the pie-plate protruded an envelope.

The captain's eyes stared greedily at the tray; then he snatched it from the boy's hands eagerly, hungrily, fiercely, and set it on the table. He tore open the note and read:

"Miss Griffith is sorry Captain Chalmers has been so unfortunate as to lose his cook, and that there is nothing in the post that he can get to eat. She fears that too much abstinence from proper nourishment will incapacitate him for the fulfilment of his duties, and begs that he will accept her humble offering, with her compliments. Also, should

he feel inclined, during the rest of the epidemic, or until he can make other arrangements, he is invited to join Miss Griffith's mess."

The captain collapsed into the chair before the table, and almost— But no, people back in the States who have read of Captain Chalmers's daring exploits and his more than heroic storming of one of the principal Moro forts on the Lake, would never believe it; they would not think it possible that he could come even near shedding tears of gratitude. But he did, while Wentworth chuckled to himself, and strolled out to tell the other "fools" about it.



ONE AND THE SAME THING

HE—Mr. Clubleigh seems to be at home in society.

SHE—I think he appears uncomfortable.

"That's what I mean."



ALL THAT WAS REQUIRED

THE WIFE—This is my new hat.

THE HUSBAND—I see. I don't like it.

"You don't have to like it, dear. You only have to pay for it."



HERSELF TO BLAME

SHE—I wish you could forget that you married me for my money.

HE—You won't let me. Don't I have to ask you for money every time I need any?



TRULY REMARKABLE

MISS WITHERS—I have never forgotten my early training.

MISS PERTLEIGH—Marvelous! What a wonderful memory you have!

THE BONBONNIÈRE

By Ethel Watts Mumford

MISS MARCIA PRESBY, a slim little woman of uncertain age, stood at her window overlooking the grass court of the Hôtel Ritz. Her gentle face wore an expression of disapproval.

At a second-story window, diagonally opposite, sat a young woman in a pink negligée, whose Titian top-knot caught the light with a metallic luster unknown to mere hair. It was upon these shimmering tresses that Miss Presby's glances of disapprobation were bent. She turned from her contemplation at the sound of an opening door.

"You are home early, dear," she said, softly, as her sister entered.

Mrs. Wysong-Lord nodded, motioning to the negro boy who followed in her wake bearing a black-topped box.

"Where's Elise?" she asked. "Elise! Unpack my gown and return the box."

The boy, whose dusky face showed an unwonted spirit of cowed humility, bowed respectfully, as he obeyed Mrs. Lord's gesture toward the adjoining room.

"You seem vexed," Miss Presby ventured.

"I cannot understand"—Mrs. Lord drew off her gloves as if they were responsible for her irritation—"I cannot understand the way these French people receive the colored races. As I came down the hall just now, I found that boy in conversation with one of the maids; she was actually flirting—that is a coarse word, but the only one. It revolted me more than I can tell you. I recognized him as the Martiniquais they employ at Francis's, and over-

heard him ask for our number. I ordered him to follow me. You should have seen his manner change—he looked positively guilty. He knows his place well enough. The fault lies with these utterly regardless French who permit such liberties!"

She paused, abruptly.

"My dear, remember what Mr. Van Zeim says—'All souls are equal,'" admonished Miss Presby.

"All souls may be equal, but all bodies are not, Marcia. I am not narrow, but one must hold to the dignities of life. They are the safeguards of society."

"I'm not disagreeing with you," Miss Presby hastened to aver, "but you express yourself too strongly. I know what you mean, and you are quite right, but we must consider the point of view."

"I have always found it difficult to adjust myself, and I fear I always shall." Mrs. Wysong-Lord seated herself by the centre-table, and absently turned the pages of her daughter's latest purchase, "Les Vieilles Chançons de France." "I observe that Americans in Paris appear to be affected by their surroundings to such an extent that they lose control of themselves. I cannot do that, Marcia, and I am glad of it."

The boy from Francis's recrossed the room, his eyes fixed with respectful admiration upon the dignified figure of Mrs. Wysong-Lord.

"Here," she ordered. He advanced, obsequiously. She dropped a fifty-centime piece into his yellow palm. "And the next time you are sent here to deliver anything, don't stop in the

halls to talk, or I shall report you. You may go."

He backed to the door, which he opened noiselessly, and slipped outside.

Mrs. Lord went to her bedroom, laid aside her simple traveling hat, and adjusted the smooth bands of her white, soft hair. Her refined, pale face was somewhat stern, her thin lips tightly closed. Her fine eyes were distant, though kindly, in expression. An exquisite tailor gown, faultless shoes, and the few well-chosen rings upon her slender, tapering fingers, all betokened refinement, and quiet, somewhat studied elegance.

The sound of loud feminine laughter and high-pitched conversation in the hallway brought her back to the sitting-room, a frown contracting her straight brows. She exchanged a glance with Miss Presby that, louder than words, proclaimed their mutual opinion.

"This is the worst of these large hostelrys," sighed Marcia. "I wish we could find some quiet family hotel. Of course, we are women of the world, and, aside from the annoyance, there can be no possible harm. But the influence of these caravansaries cannot but be detrimental to a young girl like Margot."

Mrs. Lord nodded emphatic approval.

"I have been impressed with that. It seems hard to deprive the child of the amusement of having tea downstairs where all the world congregates, but, really, the atmosphere of the place is vitiating—the dress and manner of the women are disgracefully loud. I have been thinking that, in the future, we would better have our tea in our own salon. But what is one to do? The Trudeaus and the Buckinghams are stopping here, and even the Mortimer-Bangs. I do wish Adelaide would answer my letter! I fully expected to find she had planned everything for us. She always had a way of putting things through with astonishing rapidity. I don't quite understand her silence, unless she is preparing one of her pet sur-

prises. She always loved a 'mystification,' as the French say."

Again the high-pitched girlish voice rang out in the corridor.

"Why, you dear old skeesicks! when did you get here?"

The exclamation was followed by a shower of giggles and screams, through which the murmur of a well-modulated voice was audible.

Mrs. Wysong-Lord rose in amazement.

"Why, that's Margot's voice! Can she be talking to that—that ill-bred——!"

The strident tones continued:

"Well, you're just going to have tea with papa and me—at five. I'll come for you. Isn't it a circus down there? This is great larks! You can't? Oh, but you've got to! I must run now, papa's waiting—'bye.'"

The door opened, and Margot entered the room, followed by the majestic presence of the Rev. A. Z. Van Zeim, cousin and spiritual adviser of the late Mr. Wysong-Lord. The girl was undeniably beautiful, but the perfection of her features was marred by a repellent frigidity of manner. She was tall, slender, and not ungraceful. Her heavy black hair was wound in neat coils at the nape of her neck. Her brown eyes were over-serious, and her well-modeled mouth scrupulously prim. When she spoke, a single revolted chin-dimple begged indulgence of her Puritan rigidity.

"My child," exclaimed her mother, "who spoke to you in the hall? I could not believe my ears when I heard your voice replying. Who and what is this creature, and how did you come to know such a person?"

"That was Polly Wheating, mother," Margot answered, listlessly. "She had the room next to mine at school."

"Indeed! I am surprised at the Misses Adams accepting such a pupil. Her laugh, her voice, her language, indicate from what stratum she has risen. You will not cultivate her acquaintance further! And as for having tea——"

"Margot declined at once," put in

Van Zeim, tactfully. "It was really no fault of hers that the young person addressed her. But one must be indulgent. A hoydenish exterior may cover excellent qualities, and girls quickly outgrow the natural noisiness of buoyant youth."

"You are always lenient," smiled Miss Presby.

Margot slipped out of her modish little jacket, and unpinned her hat.

"What shall I do, mother?" she inquired. "I'll have to answer if she speaks to me. She's a schoolmate, after all. I don't like her, but she has always been very nice to me. Must I refuse to meet her father if she brings him over? If you don't let me present her to you, she will be very much hurt."

Mrs. Lord looked distressed. At heart she was kindly.

"Well, my dear, of course, we shall have to be guided by circumstances. A lady must always conduct herself with politeness, but you must endeavor to keep relations formal, and not encourage any appearance of familiarity, particularly in public places."

"Yes, mother," acquiesced Margot.

"Did you enjoy the Louvre, Mr. Van Zeim?" asked Miss Presby, anxious to turn the conversation into pleasanter channels.

"Yes, indeed, and Margot, also. We have had a charming morning, have we not?"

"Yes, thank you," said Margot. "The Botticellis are wonderful, and the Leonardo da Vincis. We are planning to go again very soon."

"Dear me," said Van Zeim, "I must be growing old—I'd quite forgotten. We stopped at the banker's on our way, and here are some letters."

With a courtly bow, he handed a packet to Mrs. Lord.

"Ah, thank you, Augustus. Marcia, two for you; Margot, some wedding cards—a note from Ellie—and here is a letter from Adelaide at last! Now we shall know what she has been able to do for us. It's a good deal of an experiment, keeping house in

France, but I've always wished to try it. These little châteaux are so charming."

She tore open the crested envelope, and read aloud:

"DEAR EVELYN:

"I have both good and bad news. I will begin with the bad, and have it over with. I am leaving Double Tours to-day en route for Vienna. Poor little Gerald's hearing is growing noticeably worse, and I am taking him to Esselorn, the famous aurist. Something must be done at once, and he is the man to find the remedy, if one exists. I am, of course, in the deepest anxiety, torn between my hopes and fears, and, believe me, nothing but this dire necessity could make me leave now that I have the prospect of you as my near neighbor. Now, for my good news! I have secured for you the sweetest little château in all France, a 'gem of purest ray serene,' in a perfect Louis XV. setting. It has everything—even ghosts—and forms part of the dependencies of the Malèviqne estate. It was only through my friendship with the vicomtesse that I was able to rent it. They are enormously wealthy, and, though they never occupy the house, it has been kept as a sort of 'show place.' There is a salon, *ma chère*, with Boucher panels. There are Watteau canvases in the walls of the 'rose boudoir'; there are real Vernis Martin cabinets, and a *chaise longue* carved by Minciola himself. There is also a garden—oh, *mais*, a garden! If I could only be there when you see it! But to business. You gave me *carte blanche*—I have secured La Bonbonnière. You will find that the card is no longer white, but the figures will not frighten you. The gardeners and so on you will keep. I have engaged maids, chef, coachman and butler—the last is English, for your greater convenience. You have but to take possession and thank yours truly. I enclose a time-table. Select your train, and telegraph James McGye—that's your butler; he will see that Jules—that's your coachman—meets you at Arques—that's your station. In addition to the horses I hired by the month for you, and had brought up from Paris, I've sent mine to your stables. In kindness to me, keep them exercised. My friends will call. You will find them charming, particularly old Madame de Montalou, who is a character; her son, who hasn't one, is equally delightful, so I advise you to keep your sweet Margot well out of his sight. Otherwise, it is quite safe. There is Paul Malèviqne, a splendid *parti*, and the Duc d'Alencourt, three miles down the river at Charteris. You don't know how it breaks my heart to lose you this way, just as I foresee a whole happy Summer with you and yours. If all goes well, however, I may be back in August, and we'll hope for the best. Take my advice and fly to your nest at once. You

will grudge every hour you lose from that little heaven-on-earth.

"Adieu, and I hope, *à bientôt*."

"Faithfully," ADELAIDE.

"Now, isn't that nice!" murmured Miss Presby.

Margot flushed with annoyance.

"She seems to think, mother, that you have match-making intentions."

Mrs. Wysong-Lord raised her eyebrows.

"My dear, what nonsense! It is only one of Adelaide's little jokes. She knows perfectly well that I would never permit the attentions of these immoral Frenchmen. She is very kind, and her friends are sure to be desirable people, but as for anything more than mere neighborly relations—she wouldn't be so ridiculous."

The Rev. Van Zeim smiled, faintly.

"You forget that Madame de Thierry's married life was singularly happy. She may not entertain the same opinion of Frenchmen as you do—her experience——"

"De Thierry was an exceptional, a very exceptional, man," Mrs. Lord admitted, reluctantly. "However," she went on, "I am delighted Adelaide has been able to find us such a charming place, though I am exceedingly disappointed that she won't be there."

"Poor little Gerald!" sighed Miss Presby.

Mrs. Lord settled back into her chair.

"I must telegraph my sympathy and thanks at once. Will you ring, please, Augustus? I shall be very glad," she continued, "to be in another atmosphere. I confess the influence of Paris is distressing. I have invariably found that it grates upon one's nerves."

Miss Presby glanced between the curtains at the glinting Henner tresses of the lady across the court, and agreed.

II

WITH varied anticipations, Mrs. Wysong-Lord, Miss Presby, the Rev. A. Z. Van Zeim and the icily beautiful Margot journeyed from Paris. In a second-class compartment rode many

maids, and a King Charles spaniel; in the baggage-car rose a tumulus of luggage that seemed to defy transportation.

The entire party was irreproachable, particularly Mrs. Wysong-Lord, gowned in a smart traveling suit of gray, her beautiful white hair almost concealed by the many veils depending from her eminently appropriate toque. Miss Margot was immaculate. Her rebellious hair was subdued in neat coils. Her hat was properly girlish, her gown of blue severely plain, though it bore the mark of Paquin.

The train slowed down, a tiny station came into view, the guard opened the compartment doors, and the party descended rapidly, but without hurry. The maids appeared, laden with hand baggage; a thunderous thumping at the rear of the platform testified to the disintegration of the tumulus in the baggage-car. A moment later, and the order of the guard, "Gentlemen the voyageurs into carriages!" rang out. Compartment locks clicked, a horn sounded, and the Wysong-Lords stood alone upon the platform. Yet not alone; a bowing menial in livery respectfully called their attention to the unimportant fact that he was a footman, doubtless in their service, and, with a touch to his hat, led the way behind the *gare*, where a maroon station-omnibus of American pattern was drawn up. Behind it a second conveyance awaited the servants, while a flat-car on high wheels fairly yawned for trunks.

All this Mrs. Wysong-Lord accepted at a glance, with no sign of either surprise or commendation.

The party drove off through a hamlet of low, stone houses, down a dusty road lined with poplars, then to the right through a smiling and beautiful valley—ancient trees, broad meadows, a silver river of rapid flow, bending and winding in its erratic course seaward, superb vistas, hills crowned with verdure, through which here and there turrets and crenelated towers pricked the sky.

"What a pleasing landscape!" approved Mrs. Wysong-Lord.

"Lovely!" said Margot.

"Charming!" sighed Miss Presby.

"And what excellent roads!" added the chaplain.

The carriage turned through a high brick-and-marble gateway, and bowled smoothly down a wide avenue, shadowed by huge, interlacing trees. There was a glimpse of lawn, a flash from the placid surface of the most artificial of artificial lakes, before high lilac hedges shut off the view. The horses trotted smartly around a formal parterre, and stopped before the exquisitely carved doors of La Bonbonnière.

An hour or so later, while the other members of the household were resting from the fatigue of travel, Margot, in a white tea-gown, looking like a self-satisfied angel, made a tour of inspection. The hallway, with its wooden panels of saffron hue and delicate polish, delighted her. The candle brackets and the ormolu newel-post were finer than any she had ever seen. Even the knob of the salon door was a gem of workmanship. She turned it, and stepped softly into the room.

Yes, there were the Boucher panels—groups of laughing cherubs, weeping cherubs, even quarreling cherubs, each instinct with life and love. The walls swarmed with them, the ceiling was a-swirl with their flying forms, the whole coquettish room was vaguely astir. One was conscious of inaudible laughter. On the mantel, upheld by two delicately modeled dryads, stood a gold Cupid spinning a ball of blue enamel, which bore, in golden outlines, the world's familiar continents—the equator was a band upon which the hours shone in white numbers. The mechanism that had revolved the equator had long ago ceased to move, but Cupid appeared ready to make the world go round for all time.

The dimple in Margot's chin suddenly asserted itself, a gleam of joy lighted her somber eyes. She gazed, laughed aloud and clapped her hands. With a gurgle of sheer enjoyment, she

drew her hand lightly over the azure silk of the hangings, and sniffed at a bowl of roses on the card-table. She passed to the adjoining apartment.

"Oh," she said, aloud, "you love of a room!" All was yellow, embroidered satin, except what was shining Chinese porcelain, in panels long and narrow, in plates let into the walls, in vases on the mantels. A delightful Louis XV. notion of Chinese luxury, contrasting sharply with the view from the long French windows—terraces a-quiver with nodding flowers, descending in soft succession to the borders of a fountain, where three marble mermaids disported themselves with the mincing manners of court dames.

"Oh," said Margot, "you dear, sweet duck of a house!—you delicious delight of a garden!"

The afternoon shone warm and mellow. "I'm going out," said Margot. Pushing open one of the door-windows, she set her dainty foot on the gravel paths, but, the soft turf alluring, forgetful of decorum, she ran pell-mell across the grass, among the parti-colored flower-beds, tumbled down the terraces, laughing all the time in ripples of irrepressible merriment. Stopping suddenly at the fountain, she blew a kiss to the mermaids.

"For two cents," said Margot, "I would wade!" The mood was strong upon her, but the shock of this remarkable impulse steadied her for a moment. She glanced back at the gay red-and-white façade of the house. "I wonder if mother saw me?" flashed through her mind.

Then a miracle happened. "And what if she did? I don't care!" exclaimed Miss Margot Angeline Wysong-Lord. Thereupon she dipped one tiny foot, silk stocking, slipper and all, into the fountain. "Oo—oo!" she shivered; "it's cold!" She shook her foot with the disgusted movement of a Persian kitten that has tested the cream-jug with an inquisitive paw, then darted on, between scented hedges, across more lawns, down to the glimmering river where it wound

in graceful curves, hurrying by as if on some important, happy mission. Margot's eyes were dancing, so were her feet; her cheeks were as pink as the roses on the terraces; her hair was shaken into a million ripples, clusters and curls, and, though the hem of her tea-gown was wet, grass-stained and muddy, in all her life she had never been so beautiful.

Roland de Montalou, on the other side of the stream, sat up suddenly, nearly dropping his Béranger into the water.

"What have we here? In the name of all the little blue rabbits, is it a goddess? Am I dreaming? I have had but one absinthe! Oh, beautiful providence! so to reward me for burying myself in this hole to please my mother! If such is the reward of virtue, I will be a Bayard! I will burn candles to all the young and lovely saintesses in the calendar!"

His movement attracted her attention. She looked up. He rose hastily, still clinging to Béranger, and bowed profoundly.

The goddess's behavior was disconcerting. She dimpled, laughed outright, dropped a deep court curtsy, and, with a gleeful wave of her hand, fled laughing toward the shelter of the hedges.

Roland de Montalou stood as if petrified—for how long he did not know. He was aroused by a halloo, as young d'Alencourt came galloping over the lawn, followed by half a dozen English hounds.

"What are you doing, wasting an afternoon like this, gazing at nothing?" he demanded, gaily. "It's a day in a thousand!"

"I believe thee, my old one! It is a day in two hundred thousand! Gazing at nothing! Oh, sacred name of an umbrella! I have been gazing at a pearl, a rose, a dream!"

D'Alencourt glanced up, quickly. "Oh, the Americans who have taken La Bonbonnière! Is she, then, such a marvel?"

"As I said, a vision—eyes like black diamonds, hair of jet, a cheek

of marble flushed with rose, features chiseled!"

"*Mon cher*," said d'Alencourt, "according to your description your Dulcinea needs only a heart of stone and a will of iron to make her the hardest thing I have ever heard of. But I gather sufficient from your sculptor-lapidary description to determine me to pay my respects as attendant to the first lady caller—and I shall see that no time is lost."

"You will find me there when you come," said Montalou, with decision. D'Alencourt laughed.

"It's droll. Figure to yourself, this American household is exactly—oh, but, exactly, the same as that of the celebrated duchesse. If you please—*la maman*, daughter, aunt, and the abbé—his pardon, the clergyman—even, so I am told by François, who saw them at the station, a lap-dog—a King Charles."

Roland grinned, hopefully.

"Well, you know what the lovely daughter did. I'm sure I could live up to the other half of the bargain."

"You've lived down to the gentleman's reputation in the past, anyway. Come along, and make yourself beautiful. As I passed the stable, I told Victor to saddle The Fox for you. Come, species of an old do nothing."

The species of an old do nothing arose and followed.

Through an opening in the hedge Margot had watched the arrival of the horseman and all subsequent happenings. "It promises," said the young lady, cheerfully, "to be a pleasant Summer." She addressed the clouds overhead, much as if she depended upon the weather for her enjoyment. Evidently satisfied with the atmospheric promise, she burst into song, the refrain of a music-hall ditty and, dancing back to the house, entered the yellow room.

Comfortably ensconced on the famous *chaise longue* was Mrs. Wysong-Lord, attired in her very best *négligée* of black Cluny lace over white *moire*. On the window-seat, the Rev. V. Z.

conversed in seductive tones with Miss Presby, who undoubtedly was "making eyes."

At any other time, this exhibition, no less than the sight of Mrs. Wysong-Lord actually lounging, would have startled Margot. Somehow, these things seemed natural in their present surroundings. She even kept on humming her disreputable little song, and, contrary to all precedent, her mother beamed approval.

"You seem very happy, my dear," she murmured, indulgently.

"And so do you, mother, and you look as pretty as a peach. I wish you would wear more light things instead of black."

Mrs. Lord smiled and bridled. Never had she been so susceptible to adulation.

The Rev. Van Zeim joined the conversation, gallantly.

"I quite agree with our lovely Margot. I conceive it the duty—yes, duty—of every beautiful woman to be just as beautiful as possible."

His bow included the three ladies with equal politeness, but his gaze lingered on the blue eyes of Miss Presby, who returned the glance with interest.

Mrs. Lord laughed, and shook her fan coquettishly at the chaplain.

"Tut, tut! Remember your cloth, flatterer—Tea!" she demanded, suddenly, in tones of irritation; "tea at once! What are these servants thinking of!"

The curtains parted, and the footman entered, bearing the glittering service. His mistress delivered herself of a few remarks in far more fluent French than she had previously found at her command. A moment later, her displeasure found vent once more.

"Rum! Where is the rum? *Mon Dieu!* The ideal! No rum for the tea! Then bring port, Madeira—anything—!"

She was tired. There was no life in tea!

Her wants were hurriedly supplied, and the good lady comforted herself liberally.

"Really," smiled the chaplain, "I feel the need of a little stimulant myself—with your kind permission—" He tossed down a glass of Madeira and smiled, knowingly. "Ah! excellent! Thirty years old, if it's a day. For perfection in wine and women, one must have maturity—unless"—and he raised his glass to Margot—"it is the effervescent and intoxicating champagne; that is not age, but vintage."

"That reminds me," said Mrs. Lord, "that I have not ordered the wines for dinner, and, by the way, we must dress."

The first meal within the hospitable walls of the frivolous, mirror-decked dining-room passed off with unwonted gaiety. Mrs. Lord developed a wit so caustic, and the Rev. Van Zeim a cynicism so humorous, that the airy roof-tree rang with merriment. The party rose from the table to coffee and liqueurs in the Chinese room. Margot, weary with laughter, languidly made her way to the deep window. Candles innumerable cast a mellow glow upon the thousand treasures of the *salon d'or*, but found not one to compare with her in loveliness. She stood looking out upon the garden, white and slender as the moonlit lilies beneath the casement, and, as she gazed, she sang a quaint, Provençal ditty that had suddenly leaped to life in her memory. Where had she heard it? Ah, yes, she had glanced over the music in "*Les Vieilles Chançons de France*." Strange it should have made so deep an impression!

There was a pause, half physical well-being, half sentiment, as the notes of "*Belle Isambour*" floated through the room.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Wysong-Lord, suddenly, rapping her lorgnon on the arm of the chair. "This is abominably uninteresting. Do something, somebody. You have no more conversation than a Buddhist idol. I didn't come here to be bored!"

There was a suspicious after-dinner flush on her cheeks, and her speech was unusually rapid.

Miss Presby yawned.

"Why do anything? We've been traveling all day; getting settled, too, and after such a heavy dinner—why do anything? Let us retire early—"

"Retire early!" exclaimed Mrs. Lord. "Marcia, you're an idiot! I am awake, very wide awake! If there is one thing I abhor, it's going to bed early. I asked you to suggest something to do—to do, you understand! Augustus, haven't you an idea in your head?"

"Dominoes," said Van Zeim.

"Dominoes!" Mrs. Lord exploded. "I'll have you to understand I'm not to be made game of!"

"Whist," he suggested, brightening.

"Well, yes," she nodded. "Margot, ring! There are duplicate boards in the second tray of my pigskin trunk."

Miss Presby yawned again. "Not duplicate whist! I really can't, it's such a strain on one's mind!"

"Strain on your mind!" cried her irritable sister. "One would have to search for your intellect with a magnifying glass! Strain on the mind, indeed!—first catch your mind! If you hadn't taken five glasses of port, you'd be able to play as well as you are ever capable of playing."

The Rev. Van Zeim laughed as Miss Presby colored with annoyance. "Plain whist for to-night," he murmured, in conciliating tones. "I confess I do not feel up to mental gymnastics."

Margot turned from the window.

"I'd rather go out of doors," she said. "It's a heavenly night."

"We are going to play whist," said Mrs. Lord, rising with decision. She turned instinctively to the card-room—a genial alcove, where the Boucher Cupids again occupied the available wall space, but were here engaged in such reprehensible pastimes as fighting turtle-doves, throwing dice for hearts, and racing slender greyhounds.

They took their places as cards were brought.

Mrs. Lord's eyes sparkled, her lips twitched.

"I'm glad you thought of whist," she said, warmly, turning to the chap-

lain. "I had forgotten how much I enjoy the game."

"He jests at scores who never played at bridge," observed Augustus, tentatively.

The game began, but before the deal had passed around the circle, Mrs. Lord's interest had waned.

"Heavens!" she railed, "this is the most 'flat, stale and unprofitable' game I ever sat down to." The last adjective inspired her. "I have it!" she exclaimed, tapping her fingers excitedly upon the table. "We will play for a sou a point."

Miss Presby woke from her lethargy, and drew up her chair.

The Rev. Van Zeim demurred.

"My dear lady, should we—should you—Remember, Miss Lord is but a child."

"Indeed!" said Margot, indignantly. "I'm no more a child than you are! Besides, I don't see what your objections can be. After all, it's mother's money I play with, and that gives her twice as many chances to lose as you have."

"And twice as many to win," he retorted.

"Tut, tut!" interrupted Mrs. Wy-song-Lord. "Cut the pack. My soul! you are a set of snarling spaniels! There—a five of hearts! Just my luck! Hearts! Pooh! a meaningless trump. I have never held an honor in hearts."

Van Zeim bowed.

"On the contrary, you have always held all honors in hearts."

Mrs. Lord sniffed, but, having discovered the ace among her cards, her lips relaxed.

Miss Presby led a small diamond with an exaggerated air of mystery, and the game began in earnest. Mrs. Lord was in luck, and the neatly piled tricks at her elbow accumulated rapidly.

Then Miss Presby nodded. Whether weariness or port held sway was hard to determine. But the result was a game impossible to comprehend, and sorely trying to the patience of her ecclesiastical partner. Margot played with total disregard of convention, and,

had it not been for her mother's phenomenal good fortune, she must have brought bankruptcy upon them.

"Who are our neighbors?" she asked, as she trumped her partner's ace with the nonchalance of a card-sharper.

Mrs. Lord gave vent to her feelings concerning the play before answering the question.

"Heavens! What do you do that for? Of all the utterly imbecile performances I have ever witnessed, that was the most foolish! Pay attention, can't you? The Montalous——"

Margot ignored the invectives, and peacefully returned her opponent's lead.

"Are they friends of Cousin Adelaide's—do you suppose they will call?"

"Margot! are you insane? Clubs were Van Zeim's long suit! Call! Of course, they'll call; but I'm sure I don't care whether they do or not. I don't intend to modify my way of doing things for anybody."

"I don't see any question of modifying our way of living for the Montalous," said Miss Presby, helplessly, concealing a yawn behind her hand.

"Well, I won't—that's all!"

Mrs. Lord slammed down the jack of spades with personal animosity.

They played for some time in silence. Then Mrs. Lord abruptly pushed back her chair. "That's forty-five francs you owe me, Van Zeim," she said. She rang the bell for the butler. "You may close the house now—and—well—I did say I'd never fall into these French habits—but I want my chocolate served to me in bed, at ten to-morrow. The rest of you can please yourselves. Forty-five francs—you remember, now!"

Half an hour later, all was still in La Bonbonnière save a heavy snore from Miss Presby's room. Margot sat before her dressing-glass and smiled roguish approval at her reflection. The soft night wind swept back the curtains, while the moonlight, silvering over her girlish loveliness, contended with the rose-shaded light of the candles.

She gathered the narrow skirts of

her kimono about her, and crossed to the window. How the garden stirred and whispered—lily to rose, rose to lily! The view opened to her a glimpse of fairyland—velvet black and mysterious crystal, dusky silver and shadowed purples. The rippling river shone and beckoned; myriad perfumes, keen and intoxicating, filled the air. Out of the night a nightingale sang, piercing sweet. Margot leaned far out upon the sill, her heart a-throb with youth and romance, night magic and perfume spells. The words of the old song came again to her lips. Softly she sang:

*"Le Roy seant en pleine cour
Où arrive maint grand Seigneur,
Là l'on ne parle que d'Amour."*

From the shadows beneath the window came a voice—a tender tone, a breath, a sigh—so faint it might have been but the echo of her own:

*"Le Roy envoy un messenger,
Vers Isambour, sans plus tarder,
D'autant qu'il veut la marier."*

Margot drew back, hesitated, and searched the shadows with smiling eyes, but the song vanished like the ghost of a song. There was no stir in the hedges; the nightingale took up his interrupted serenade to the roses nodding gently.

Margot turned from the window, her pulses strangely stirred.

"It seems," she said, slowly, "that the terraces are haunted!"

Outside, in the bewitched garden, stood young d'Alencourt. He sighed as one awakening from a dream.

"I couldn't imagine what made me come," he murmured, "but now I know!—now I know!"

III

"ROLAND," said Madame de Montalou, "you are absurd! Pray remember I am arranging your marriage with your cousin, Claire; you are to make yourself agreeable to her, and let *l'Américaine* alone."

"Adored mother, pray allow me"

—Roland yawned discreetly—"the privilege of showering my attentions where I please until after marriage. Observe, if I do not devote myself to our fair neighbor, she will have the whole company distraught. I might efface myself and retire from the field, but that only means that every other man would rush to fill the place which, as host, I have a right to claim. If you wish your fête to be saved from becoming a scene of strife, permit me to bear away the golden apple of discord to the farthest corner of the orangerie, and there hold it tight."

Madame de Montalou laughed. "Sophist!"

"Sophist? Not in the least. Wait till his three watchful daughters behold the admiral at his devotions!"

"True," she chuckled. "It will be most amusing."

"I perceive," said Roland, "that you are preparing a comedy with which to delight your wicked-old-lady sense of humor. It is for this you would relegate me to the mercies of Cousin Claire. You are a heartless epicure of your own emotions."

He crossed to his mother's chair, and kissed her withered cheek affectionately.

"You are very rude to your parent," she said. "And, may I ask, is my son so devoid of emotional epicureanism?"

"I make it a point to inherit only good qualities," he answered.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed, ruefully. "What a small choice you had! Nevertheless, I love you, and fear for you."

"The Margot mania? I have it, madame, in a desperate form—the bacilli quite large and active."

"She has been here only a month," she frowned.

"And what has happened? The admiral is quite irresponsible, the pious Edmond is prostrate at her feet, de Castries says he will commit suicide, d'Alencourt sighs all day and talks in his sleep; *le petit* Caissenote does not sleep, and talks all day. Thursday last, while watching her

drive by, the fat innkeeper of the 'Golden Gun' fell from the window. How then, with a Béranger always in my pocket, could you hope for me to escape? I am no better than the rest."

"Well, don't let Claire see it, that's all. This family has had too many dissensions already; we cannot afford to offend the few relatives who remain on speaking terms with us—particularly those with bank-accounts. Come, give me your arm."

As they turned to leave the cheerful boudoir, his mother caught sight of their reflection in the tall cheval-glass. She paused, with a little squeeze of his arm, and a sigh, half content, half regret.

"I am proud of you, Roland," she said.

"And I of you," he answered.

"My sixtieth fête-day," she murmured.

"And the greatest belle in the country-side," he added, indicating the masses of flowers that decorated the room. "See how they have remembered you—and wait—you have not seen half!"

He led her affectionately down the stairs to the great salon, which had been transformed into a bower.

"Ah," she smiled, "you have arranged everything charmingly—developed quite an executive power. I was somewhat tremulous, I must confess, when you insisted on planning everything yourself. Here, I see, you will have the collation served, and over there the musicians will be placed—"

"And here," he interrupted, with a laugh, "I have devised a concealed corner for the apple of discord and her host!"

She shook her head in reproof.

"Incorrigible! In our world one does not do such things. Even if she is American, I do not imagine she will wish to impersonate the forest maid in the dismal wood. Listen, the music begins! People are arriving, and I suppose you wish to let them assemble here before you come for me

to make my grande entrée. To your duties, my son. You will find me waiting in the library."

A half-hour later the scene was brilliant. The salons overflowed with gaily dressed, animated groups, and the wide lawns were sprinkled with chattering visitors, the sparkle and color of uniforms blending with the pale tones of clinging Summer gowns.

Upon her throne-seat, smiling and gracious, Madame de Montalou received the congratulations of her friends. At her side stood Roland, handsome and aristocratic, easy and graceful, but obviously anxious because the party from La Bonbonnière delayed its appearance.

"There is Claire," whispered his mother, maliciously. "You are excused from further service, and may join her. Ah, and here is Yolande, with her inevitable poet."

A tall, nonchalant woman, with narrow, heavy-lidded eyes, advanced, leaning lightly upon the arm of a man, somewhat her junior, whose slightly bald temples, lined face, and sunken eyes, indicated experience beyond his years. Yolande de Colville greeted Madame de Montalou with obvious reserve.

"I was not aware," Yolande said, coldly, when the poet had disposed of the well-turned phrase of compliment he had evidently prepared for the occasion, "that this was to be a costume affair, or is it some bouffe which you are preparing as a surprise?"

Roland looked his mystification, and Renaud d'Estreville colored.

"Ah," she continued, "doubtless it is, as I suspected at first, the eccentric Americans, of whom I hear so much—my first glimpse, I must own, was startling."

"Really?" said Madame de Montalou; "and may I inquire when and how this occurred?"

"It would be a pity," replied Madame de Colville, with irritation, "to spoil the spectacular effect—here they are."

A turning of heads, a ripple of exclamations, a Babel of sudden con-

versation, and the disturbing element entered. First, Mrs. Wysong-Lord in gorgeous array, her head held high, her quick, nervous step ringing sharp on the polished floor. Behind her, Margot, radiant as a June morning, smiling, bowing, dimpling irresistibly. A tiny spaniel was cuddled under her arm, and a totally inappropriate diamond collar encircled her young throat. Closing the procession was an extraordinary brilliant figure, a be-turbaned, be-sashed, balloon-breeched negro lad, bearing with solemn pride an enormous bunch of orchids. The three advanced to Madame de Montalou, whose piquant old face pleated into a thousand wrinkles of suppressed merriment. Madame de Colville turned her back and addressed herself to her cavalier, who, with his eyes riveted on Margot, was oblivious to the attention.

Roland advanced to meet the newcomers, and gallantly conducted Mrs. Lord to the dais.

"A thousand felicitations, *chère* Madame de Montalou," she said, condescendingly.

"And mine," added Margot, over her mother's shoulder.

"Will you let your elders speak, bad child!" rapped out Mrs. Lord. "*Permettez*, a few flowers with which to wish you happiness, *avances donc*, William!"

The negro boy grinned, and, with a low bow, presented the orchids.

"What magnificence!" exclaimed Madame de Montalou, drawing away from the somewhat sickly fragrance. "Thank you for your kind wishes. Roland, have these flowers placed near the buffet. They are so beautiful every one should see them. Be sure they don't go to my rooms," she added, under her breath—"I should smother."

D'Estreville managed by a masterly flank maneuver to place himself next to Roland, Madame de Colville in vain redoubling her efforts to hold his attention—Margot had glanced at him.

"Ah," murmured Roland to his mother, who was not missing the by-

play, "what did I tell you? The trouble begins."

A gleam of mischief lighted her eyes, and a moment later the poet was bowing before the Americans, while Madame de Colville, astounded and angry, had ranged herself by the discountenanced Roland.

"I wish you and Yolande would find Claire," said the hostess, her eyes snapping with amusement. "D'Es-treville will pilot Madame Lord and mademoiselle, and I'm really anxious Claire should feel quite at home. It is her first visit to me, you know," she added, graciously.

The discomfited ones made common cause, and crossed the room to the doorway.

Madame de Montalou, still laughing, turned to her eccentric guests.

"Oh," said Margot, apologetically, "I know I shouldn't have brought Reggie, but he made such a scene when we were leaving—you don't mind, do you?"

"Not in the least," returned Madame de Montalou. "I'm always at home to dogs, and yours I like—he is well-bred. Where did you find your Nubian slave? Did you bring him with you?"

"No," explained Mrs. Lord. "I wanted something, a bit of color, you know, about the house. First, I thought of a parrot. Then I remembered this boy. He was employed by Francis; so I sent for him, and had his livery made. It is really quite cheerful—a relief from the monotony of maids and butlers, though I think I shall put the footman in powder."

"That will be quite perfect," said Madame de Montalou, as she strove to overhear the conversation between the poet and the beauty.

"Yes," Margot was saying, "I put on that diamond collar to keep mother from wearing it. She looked like a Christmas-tree, or the show-window in the Palais Royale. Will you really dedicate a song to me? I shall be enchanted; our Tziganies shall set it to music, and you shall come and listen."

"If you will sing it, I will write a

chançon that will live forever, that 'shall circle the world on wings of melody.'"

Margot smiled.

"Do," she said. "But you know I don't sing much—just hum to myself when I take my solitary walks."

The poet's face brightened.

"And where do you take these lonely rambles?" he inquired, with transparent disingenuousness.

Seemingly innocent of his trend of thought she answered: "Oh, everywhere; but my favorite road is the big highway leading to the village—the views are so beautiful."

"We will see," thought Renaud, "that the walks are not so solitary. A young girl should not wander thus unaccompanied about the country."

Margot aroused him from his pleasant reflections by an exclamation of pleasure. A tall gentleman of military aspect was bowing before her.

"Ah, admiral," she beamed, "I am so glad to see you again."

"And I." He blushed under his tan in violent contrast to his white hair and mustache. "You grow more beautiful every day." He nodded a condescending recognition to the poet, who responded with affected indifference. "How do you manage to be radiant always?" the admiral continued. "You are invariably perched upon the very pinnacle of loveliness, as if to soar even to the realms of Venus herself."

"Ha!" growled the poet; "these heavy-witted fools, who make themselves ridiculous in their efforts to follow the muse! Hear him prate! It sickens me!" And observing that Margot was presenting to his inspired eyes an exquisite view of her shoulder, he bowed his excuses and left them, haughtily.

"You flatter me, admiral," Margot murmured.

"But you have discovered the secret of perfection!"

She smiled, wisely.

"I anoint my face with dew, gathered at five in the morning of the first of May, and I keep under my

pillow a bat's wing from the belfry of Notre Dame—but the whole secret is that I am always well. I walk a great deal, and take long rides."

"Ah!" said the admiral, who, in spite of his marine training, was an enthusiastic horseman. "And when, may I ask, do these gallops take place?"

"Every day." And Margot was apparently quite unaware of the plans forming under the admiral's white hair. "About five o'clock, mother insists that I take a groom, but I always give him the slip. I hate to be tracked by servants—it grates on one's nerves, doesn't it?"

Evidently their tête-à-tête had had the same effect upon the admiral's three daughters, for suddenly and artfully the conversation was broken in upon, and Margot found herself flatteringly but completely absorbed by their enthusiastic attentions. Reggie growled; he was becoming restless. The eldest daughter smiled, tolerantly.

"I have heard," she said, "that in America the dog has quite a social position. That teas and luncheons are given him, and he goes everywhere."

Margot nodded. "Oh, yes, they are quite as much in demand there as the tame cat is here."

"What a sweet little fellow!" murmured the second sister, bending forward, and extending a daintily gloved hand to caress Reggie's silky head. She did not see Margot's slim fingers close in a quick nip upon Reggie's confiding tail. The next instant she was startled by shrill and angry yelps, and Reggie's needle teeth sank into her thumb.

"Oh, how dreadful!" cried Margot, slapping the nose of her snarling pet. "Oh, do forgive him! I am so sorry! Let me see. I hope he won't be sick! Wasn't it fortunate you had on white gloves?—colored ones would have been full of poisonous dye. He didn't break the skin, did he? No? Oh, see," she cried to d'Alencourt, who, having paid his devotions to his hostess, had joined them at the first

outcry, "see what my bad, bad dog has done!"

The three daughters, forming a hollow triangle around their imperiled father, withdrew, ostensibly to ascertain the extent of the damage.

"I saw you pinch the tail of Reginald; I was just behind you," Geoffrey remarked, quietly.

"Then you mustn't tell," she answered, "or I shall let him loose at you!"

"Have pity!" he implored. "Spare me! I am not fit to die!"

"The impertinence of those creatures!" she exclaimed. "They deliberately came over to interfere with my conversation with the admiral! Reggie, you are a dog beloved by his mistress. You shall have unnumbered good things for your noble deed. Did he have his feelings hurt? Poor angel!"

"If I follow up the ladies and bite one—Mademoiselle Marie, the youngest, by preference—will you talk to me like that?" asked d'Alencourt, wistfully.

"You would develop hydrophobia," she answered. "She was in a rage when she left."

"I would risk even that to please you," he said, with conviction. "I couldn't possibly be any more mad than I am. In fact, I think if I should bite Mademoiselle Marie she would develop a wild infatuation for you."

"Then," said Margot, with decision, "I forbid you even the smallest nip."

"Your will is law," he bowed. "The snowy shoulder of the fair Marie shall continue intact. But suppose we walk out for a moment to the terraces. It is very warm here, which, I feel sure, accounts for Reginald's nervous attack; a little air will do him good, and, besides, I can point out to him some charming glimpses of the river and the park. I can tell by his large, full, protruding eyes that he has poetic dispositions and keen appreciations."

"He has," she nodded, gravely.

"His only fault is bad taste in gastronomy. Fancy biting that lean, dried lady!"

"Ah, but suppose him endowed with polite penetration in such matters, my dear, beautiful Miss Lord. He would not be a safe companion for you."

"Let us," said Margot, freezingly, "show Reggie the scenery."

To conduct his fair charge out of doors was no easy matter. She was surrounded, stopped a dozen times to exchange compliments with as many infatuated Lovelaces. Even the women, when not openly hostile, were as enthusiastic as the men. At last, they gained refuge and comparative quiet upon the marble balcony overlooking the lovely valley.

"Reginald," said d'Alencourt, gravely, "to the right you will observe the Château Colville; below is the Malèvique estate, administered by the Vicomtesse Jeanne, a dear friend of mine, to whom I hope some day to present you. She is a great admirer of well-conducted and intelligent dogs. Further on, beyond the meadows, the road leads to Dieppe and the sea. To the left is the river winding by various charming residences, while far away in that clump of very dark verdure, dominating the village of Arques, you will note two heavy Norman towers. Those, Reginald, belong to Les Charteries, and are absolutely at your disposal. I hope in the near future to entertain you there. I have an English pack, several Great Danes and some Russian boar-hounds of excellent family, who will be pleased to welcome you as their master."

He looked wistfully to Margot's face as he spoke. Her eyes sparkled impishly.

"Reginald accepts with pleasure," she said, with sufficient accent upon the name to rob the remark of any hopeful meaning. "Some day when I go for my daily row, I'll take Reginald along, and show him all the river and the châteaux you so kindly pointed out, and, perhaps, one day I'll row him past Les Charteries, and let him have a look at that."

"About four o'clock to-morrow afternoon," remarked d'Alencourt, "I shall be in my boat abreast of La Bonbonnière. I mention this so that you will not allow Reginald to call at his residence of Les Charteries, in the absence of his humble janitor. I think perhaps it would be wiser for you to pass by and have a glimpse of it before you let him come."

"Perhaps," said Margot, absently, "perhaps—listen!" she exclaimed, suddenly. "Oh, lovely! they are playing a minuet! I adore a minuet! Don't you? I never can keep still!" Reggie was unceremoniously slipped from his mistress's silken lap, as Margot rose with dignified sauciness. "One, two, three!" She tapped her slippers to upon the tessellated pavement, delicately extending her skirt at the side between her dainty fingers. "Forward and bow!" She made a sweeping curtsy, and came back to her first position with exquisite grace. "Come, come!" she exclaimed, flushing with eagerness, "dance it with me—of course you can!"

Hardly knowing what he did, but wholly fascinated by his enchanting partner, he led her through the evolutions of the courtly dance. The figures came to him as if by inspiration, and the astonishing American was so sure of herself, so familiar with the stately measures that a mistake seemed impossible. With bows and turns, gallant advances and coy recedings, shy glances and bold declarations, the mimic dance of love and conquest drew to a close, till, with a final deep obeisance, it ceased.

The music stopped. The mocking voice of Roland de Montalou brought the oblivious dancers to their senses.

"Mademoiselle is a dream, a vision, a Fragonard—but you, *mon cher*, if you could see yourself performing in that twentieth-century costume, your coat-tails waving in the breeze, your white tie bulging, your collar decapitating you! And, oh, species of a blind ostrich, look about you, and behold your delighted audience."

"You are jealous," said d'Alencourt, "of our charming saraband; and as for the audience—so are they."

"And why, may I ask," demanded Margot, haughtily, "may I not dance a minuett upon a balcony, if I choose? Is there anything so unusual about that?"

"Whatever you do is right, your majesty," he submitted, gravely; "but being, as d'Alencourt has so aptly put it, jealous, I think it time he made himself more generally agreeable, and permitted me to show the orangerie to your highness."

"I go!" said d'Alencourt. "You are my host, and I must bend to your despotic will. But if you knew to what ends I leave you, you would not hold so high your homely head! Down with tyrants!"

Squaring his shoulders, he strode away.

"May I have the honor?" begged Roland, bowing.

She slipped her hand upon his arm, and they disappeared toward the retreat "specially designed for the host and the apple of discord."

Meanwhile, d'Alencourt, determination written large upon him, sought out Mrs. Wysong-Lord. He found that lady surrounded, dividing the honors of the afternoon with Madame de Montalou herself, who was frankly absorbed in her eccentric guest. After some impatient manœuvring, he succeeded in separating the elderly belles, and finding a comparatively quiet spot.

"Ah!" sighed Mrs. Lord, as she seated herself in the depths of a Louis XVI. arm-chair; "I am abominably thirsty. This heat, this air, these sickening flowers! Heavens!"

D'Alencourt bowed. "I have a request to make, Madame Lord."

"Foolish boy," she laughed, raising her lorgnon and examining him with critical approval, "what may I do for you? I'm sure whatever an old lady can do for such a young scamp as you will be permissible and proper. Come, I am as thirsty as the great Sahara! What is your request?"

Geoffrey drew himself up to his full height with courtly manliness. "Madame, I have the honor to beg the hand of your daughter, or at least your permission to approach her as her suitor. I do not know what your customs may be, but I am anxious in all things to meet with your approval. The dot is immaterial to me. You know who I am, and what I have to offer—it is something, but not half what I wish I might give to the woman I love."

Mrs. Wysong-Lord extended her slim hand graciously. D'Alencourt bent and kissed it.

"Naturally it is understood. Pay your court when you please, it has my entire approval—in fact, it is the proper thing. And now, my son, do not forget that I am quite, quite perishing in the desert. Prove to me what an attentive son-in-law you will be, and, as you love me, find me a glass of champagne!"

IV

MARGOT sat upon the lush green grass cushioning the river's edge, and threw crumbs to a foolish family of mandarin ducks. Roland stood upon the opposite bank, and looked on with envy.

"I wish I were a duck," he remarked, "or a mandarin, or anything in which you would have a real interest. If I were an automobile, I would be so tame I would take gasoline from your hand."

"I should like that," said Margot, gravely. "I should then have the only tame auto in the whole world. But you are only a man, and almost everybody has a tame man. I think, in fact, I should like a wild one much better."

"Very well," he responded, cheerfully, "I will be savage. I will be a stealthy *'Mohoque'*, and take *'scalpe-loquentes'*."

Margot nodded.

"That will be nice. Begin on Renaud's, will you, please?"

Montalou flushed, angrily.

"What do you mean? Has that poet been annoying you?"

"Annoying, no—not that. He's just a nuisance. I'm tired of telling him I don't want him. Then he goes and complains to the Colville. At first, she was jealous of me because he would love me, and now she's furious because I won't love him."

Montalou sat down, settling himself comfortably.

"That is most curious!"

"Oh, not at all, I quite understand it, myself. It's a reflection on her taste. She has made no effort to disguise her infatuation for him, so it's quite natural that she shouldn't like to see her special choice a drug on the market. I'm sorry to be disobliging to both of them, but, really, I can't be bothered."

"How old are you?" demanded Roland, abruptly.

"Nineteen," she answered, destroying a fleur-de-lis. "I have reached the years of indiscretion."

He threw up horrified hands. "Nineteen! Heavens! Nineteen! This is an ingénue!"

"Nothing so worldly as that, I hope," she observed, seriously.

"An ingénue!" he continued, "who dissects the heart of the most Balzacian episodes with the scalpel of a woman of forty! What is this America that produces such girls?"

"I will tell you." Margot cast the remnants of the lily of France upon the curling eddies of the stream. "America is a hothouse, producing wonderful exotic varieties of *jeune fille*. When that is not the case, it is a wind-swept plateau, where the original plant differentiates and becomes, if less intoxicating of perfume, at least extremely hardy. In that case, the American Beauty becomes a hardy bloomer. Do you follow me, or am I too horticultural?"

"You could never be too anything for me to follow you!"

She ignored his compliment, and stared with wide eyes at the blue distance. "*Mon Dieu!*" she murmured. "How strange it all seems—

America! Why, it is a foolish little colony somewhere far away, a place for Jesuits and *coureurs-de-bois*. I can hardly realize that I lived there and was part of it once. Isn't it wonderful how this country absorbs one? Really, don't you find me very French? Do I seem foreign?"

Roland leaned his head upon his arm, and gazed across the stream.

"You are like nothing and no one that I ever met before. I was hoping you were a real American type—I fondly dreamed, a common American type. I was planning to go to America to live. It would be the paradise of Mahomet."

Margot dimpled.

"The Turkish room in the Waldorf would be your Mecca." She sobered, suddenly. "But I really have no desire to go back. This garden, the river, the house—everything here, seems made for me. I've never been so happy."

A self-satisfied smile appeared under Montalou's mustache, and he blew a kiss over the heads of the mandarin ducks.

"Never so happy—never so happy!" Margot repeated, dreamily, as she rose to her feet and brushed the bread-crumbs from her lap.

The dip of oars, the creak of a revolving lock smote upon their ears, and the slim bow of a *canot* shot around a curve, propelled by the vigorous biceps of young d'Alencourt. A few strong strokes brought him between the occupants of either bank. He floated in mid-stream, gently backing water, and regarded them with amused tolerance.

"I'm at the point of tears," he observed, "to break up this neighborly tête-à-tête, but, my dear Montalou, it is what mademoiselle calls in her barbarous English—which I looked up in the dictionary—'*une datté*,' which is a tropical palm-fruit, but, nevertheless, appears to mean a rendezvous."

Roland rolled over and addressed the clouds with disgust. "He is a spoil-joy, a species of a lettuce-head, an escaped one from the asylum! He

has no consideration, no conception of the obligations of friendship!" He sat up and wrathfully watched his chum, as he brought the boat close to the opposite bank, and assisted the fair passenger to embark. "Ha!" he railed, "I hope mademoiselle stamps a hole right through the bottom! I hope there is a flood! I hope you catch a crab and make yourself ridiculous! I hope it rains! I hope you haven't an idea, and make yourself a bore! I hope you run aground! I hope you take cold!"

They were out of sight around the bend, but his sorrowing was distinctly audible. Margot laughed, delightedly.

"I like him," she said. "He is such an object of luxury—so distinctly without any mission, save to delight the eye and amuse the ear."

"His family have found him a very expensive luxury," said d'Alencourt. Then, repenting of his treachery to his friend, he added, hastily: "Everybody likes him—he is so engagingly—er—naughty."

She sighed with sun-warmed happiness of mind and body. The late afternoon light laid a red-gold caress upon the intense green of the landscape. The blue of the sky was half rusty violet; the rushing river flashed like a brazen buckler. Deep in its tumultuous currents the trailing water-weeds took on a copper hue. An opulence of color, an intense and silent orgy of vigorous life, throbbed in the air. Margot felt it in curious kinship of mood. It was as if the transmuted gold of the sun had become blood and glowed in her veins. She sat silent, inhaling deep breaths of pagan delight. They were gliding on an enchanted stream, and surely it took but little imagination to lift aside the veil of the commonplace. To right and left, the giant trees of ancient parks spread their twisted branches, thick foliaged and lusty in their green old age. Half revealed, half hidden, the massive walls and bastions of Norman châteaux looked down from above, or the airy, aspiring pinnacles of Gothic tourelles were silhouetted

against the sky. A breeze, freighted with perfume, crept down upon them as they passed beneath the fairy spires of the chapel of Saint Cune-gond. The bells chimed slowly, echoing mellow, liquid tones of topaz and amber.

"Yes," said Margot, suddenly and reflectively. "'Roland'—it is a pretty name. Did you hear the bells say 'Ro—o—land'?"

D'Alencourt rested upon his oars.

"My Queen Margot, do not imagine to yourself that I brought you with me just to hear you talk about that brigand, Roland."

Her eyes narrowed, teasingly. The spell of the golden afternoon was broken.

"Are you so like all other men, that you want to be talked to about yourself?"

D'Alencourt nodded, genially.

"Yes. Or you—on the whole, I think I should like to hear about you. Who are you, anyway?"

She turned from him with a smile.

"I am 'Belle Isambour,'" she said.

He started. Had she guessed it was he who had answered her song, on that moonlit night, when he had stood in the garden and seen her for the first time, as she looked from her window?

"Belle Isambour was very true to her love," he said. "Would you be true like that?"

"Oof!" she sniffed. "Belle Isambour would have listened to the king, if they hadn't shut her up in a tower. Of course, then she made up her mind she'd escape. I would."

*"Belle Isambour est à la tour,
Où il n'y a peu de jour,
Mais toujours songe à ses amours."*

Margot's tones thrilled with a spell that was sheer magic—uneearthly sweet, as if a supernatural voice sang second to her girlish soprano. So chanted Vivian, the Lorelei, the sirens.

D'Alencourt looked at her, his heart in his eyes, his soul straining to find and touch her elusive spirit.

She sat back among the cushions,

her hand idly dipping in the water, her head thrown back, her eyes half closed, with something almost tragic in their dreaming look, and the voice that came between her scarlet, parted lips, seemed a call directed to him from some other world—a call that wrung his heart and stifled his breath.

"Margot," he murmured, "Margot! Don't be so beautiful, my sweet—you break my heart! Margot!"

She roused herself, quickly, with an impish upturning of lips and eyes.

"Am I beautiful? Am I sweet?" she demanded. "I don't know that that pleases me—beautiful, yes—but sweet! 'Sweet'! Horrid!"

"*Ma douce mie* is a very exquisite old term of endearment. I'm sorry you don't like it."

He was hurt and angry at her change of mood.

"Well, I don't!" she said, belligerently. "I hate it—it's weak, and poor and dependent. Sweet! How dare you call me sweet! You can put me ashore right here and now! Do you hear? You shall see if I'm sweet. I want to land. Row to the shore," she ordered. She was half in jest, but as she saw his face harden into lines of determination, her mood changed to anger.

He did not obey, but continued to row quietly onward.

"You heard me?" she cried, flushing. "I wish to land!"

"You are perfectly absurd," he argued, "to be angry because I called you sweet."

"I'm angry because you don't do what I ask you to," she retorted.

"But you ask me to put you ashore because I called you sweet, so it all comes back to the same thing."

Opposition fanned the flame of her resistance. She glanced at the flower-grown banks, at the shimmering river, at d'Alencourt pulling energetically, and, without a word of warning, threw all her weight to one side, swinging her feet over the edge of the boat as it careened.

D'Alencourt instinctively strove to balance the capsizing skiff, but her

action had been too swift. The water bulged for a moment above the shining, varnished rim, then, with a crystalline gurgle, rushed in. D'Alencourt lost his balance, and the next instant found them both in the water, the overturned boat between them.

"Can you swim?" came his voice, anxiously.

"No," she answered, cheerfully.

"Can you?"

"No. Absurd, isn't it? I'll work my way around, and hold you on. You won't lose your grip, will you?"

"Oh, dear, no!" she laughed. "How delightfully droll! But you'd better not come on this side, too—it would pull the boat over, and make it harder to hold on. Do you think we'll drift out to sea? Do look at the oars and cushions floating down—there's a perfect string of them. I didn't realize there were so many things in a boat, did you?"

Her anger had vanished. In its place was a childish delight in the novelty of the situation, and complete oblivion to any danger.

He worked his way slowly along on the opposite side of the boat till his hands closed over hers. The prospect of spending hours in the water suddenly became alluring.

"You have the most charming hands," he observed, tightening his grip. "I'm so glad you thought to tip us over. And I take it all back; you are not sweet—you are a devil of an angel, or an angel of the devil—but not sweet. I hope no one ever rescues us, and we float on forever. We're not by any chance approaching that bank over there, are we? These eddies are the very mischief. However, we were fortunately in the middle of the channel when we turned over."

"I'm glad it's a warm afternoon," she remarked. "This bath is really refreshing."

"The water has made your hair curl in a fashion ravishing," said d'Alencourt. "I have but one wish—that the curves of this miserable boat were less. The keel is too round and

wide—your enchanting head too far away; otherwise, this would be heaven!"

"Your sentiments, then, have not cooled?" she inquired.

"Not at all. Everything save my love has cooled—all is dampened save my ardor. But did you not see the clouds of steam that rose as I struck the water? Ah, there is a water-rat swimming just ahead of us!"

"Oh! Oh!" screamed Margot. She grasped his hands convulsively.

"That," said d'Alencourt, closing his eyes, "was delicious. I pray the river may teem with rats."

"I hate you!" said Margot, vindictively, with a flash of sudden friendliness in her deep eyes.

A swirl and rush of waters carried them around a bend. The river widened. On either side broad meadows and regular lines of poplars showed the castaways to be out of the château district and nearing the village. The heavy arches of a stone bridge marked where the roadway crossed above the town.

"Alas! a sail—a sail!" cried d'Alencourt. "At any moment we may be rescued!"

"Look!" exclaimed Margot, "there is Madame de Colville's automobile. It's the only mauve one, and that's Renaud chauffing all by himself."

"Perhaps he won't see us," said d'Alencourt, hopefully.

"Perhaps," said Margot; "but he will hear me!"

She raised her voice in a soprano scream for help. The machine stopped short with a jerk and a cloud of steam.

"Hope he's blown the wretched thing up!" said d'Alencourt.

Margot laughed, delightedly, and began to sing once more:

*"Regardant avec grand soin,
Elle avisa venir de loin,
Son amy chevauchant grand train.*

*"Amy, qui par icy passez,
Or arrêtez vous, arrêtez,
Ma patience vous aurrez.*

"Only," she explained, "Belle Isambour's knight wasn't riding a lavender

automobile that belonged to another lady, was he?"

"I hope it bit and kicked, anyway," said d'Alencourt, bitterly. "There, now, he's running down to the washing-stones on the other side of the bridge. I believe if I kick continuously I can keep this sacred affair in mid-stream where he cannot rescue us. I do not want to be saved!"

Preceded by a procession of oars, cushions and boat-mats, they approached the bridge. For a moment the cool gloom under the arches enfolded them. They looked up to ancient granite blocks, green and dank with weeds, over which reflections of the glittering waters ran in ripples of light. Then, out once more into the flash of the gold-red sun. D'Alencourt struggled energetically to keep the boat away from the right-hand shore, where leaped and called the excited poet, hovering, wet-footed, upon the broad, flat stones used by the village washerwomen when beating their linen, since linen was invented.

"Do not fear," he called; "I will save you. Do as I say."

Margot giggled, delightedly.

"Idiot," murmured d'Alencourt, under his breath.

"Here," called Renaud, waving a dust-cover over his head; "catch this and I will pull you in."

As the boat shot by, he tossed the duster forward. Margot caught it. The skiff turned sidewise as the shawl became taut. She clung for an instant to the overturned keel, then, with a quick jerk, released her hold, dragging her hand from under d'Alencourt's grip.

"You don't want to be saved, you know," she said, sweetly.

Down the stream went the heir to a dukedom, while an instant later Margot stood upon the stones of the *lavoir*, dripping, bedraggled, and shaking with laughter.

Her rescuer clasped his hands with horror. "D'Alencourt! Oh, why did you not cling to the boat? I could have pulled you both ashore. *Mon Dieu!* what will happen?"

"Happen?" said the lady, cheerfully. "Don't you suppose they'll pick him up as he passes through the village? Of course. They'll have him out by the time he's in sight of the second bridge."

"*Hélas!*" cried the poet. "You are cold, you are wet! Why should I think of him when you suffer? Quick, to the auto! Ah, *Dieu merci*, I came in time."

"I was glad when I saw you," she smiled. "I really began to sing."

"How brave you are!" he exclaimed.

They climbed the rise to the bridge, where stood the lavender motor. Margot leaned over the parapet and gazed affectionately down the river. An excited crowd was gathering along the bank. A fisherman in a dory had put off from the stone steps by the church of Notre Dame des Flots. In the midst of the flashing path of sunlight was her whilom companion in danger and the overturned boat.

"I like him," said Margot, dreamily. "I like him very much—don't you?"

"No," said Renaud, sharply, "I don't. He is a *duc*. Come, you are wet. I must take you home at once."

She turned reluctantly, and mounted beside him. He manipulated the gear with a knowing air. There was a puff, an explosive jerk, the ponderous machine quivered spasmodically, and refused to move.

"I might have known it," said Margot. "The lavender charger has balked."

Renaud looked annoyed.

"I'll have it mended in a moment," he assured her; "but perhaps you'd better get out, these stupid things are so uncertain."

She descended from her perch, and watched him as he delved into the depths of coils and tanks, appearing from time to time, oil-covered, frowning and hot.

"This is most unfortunate," he apologized. "I can't find anything the matter—but it won't go."

The machinery pounded and blew with demoniacal energy. Margot kicked her heels against the parapet.

"I'm going to walk," she said.

"You are cold!" he exclaimed, anxiously. "Heavens! you are shivering, and this animal of a motor! *Ciel!* It is to rage!"

Margot had shivered, but not with cold. Over her shoulder, she had watched the rescue of d'Alencourt. At any moment he might come up and offer assistance. After she had played her pranks upon him, that would never do, never!

The sharp, regular hoof-beat of a trotting horse became audible—came closer. Margot advanced to the centre of the road. Renaud under the automobile, deafened by his own language, the din of tools and the escape of steam, heard nothing.

Margot gave a little scream of joy and clapped her hands, as from behind the high stone wall emerged a tall, gray horse, surmounted by a tall, gray man. "The admiral!" she gasped, gleefully, running toward him on swift and noiseless feet.

De Gerney reined in with an exclamation of surprise. "Mademoiselle! What has happened? Did that dirty machine blow you into the water? Inventions of the devil! *Val!*" He dismounted and approached her eagerly.

"Quick, quick!" she whispered, rippling with merriment. "Help me on your horse and you lead him! We'll take the short cut through the Malèvique grounds. I'll tell you all about it—quick! before Mr. Renaud sees!"

Mystified, but delighted, the elderly horse-marine obeyed superior orders. Margot's foot was on his open palm, her hand on his shoulder, in another instant she was balanced, light as a bird, and quite at home, on the back of the gray charger.

"You are a knight," she announced, gravely. "and you are rescuing a demoiselle in distress from a wicked troubadour on—I mean under—a lavender palfrey belonging to an enchantress who lives in a château of glass."

The admiral looked mystified, but supremely happy. They turned in at the Malèvique gates, and took a bridle-path that wound between giant oaks.

The long, blue twilight of France had come. Though every object was clear and distinct, all had grown mysterious. One big star pricked the east above the violet hills and spreading tree-tops. The warrior and the distressed demoiselle proceeded slowly and in silence along the moss-grown path.

"First," said Margot, breaking the stillness with melodious whispers, "there was a chief of mercenaries, who would have lain a spell upon me. Then a prayer to good Saint Cunegond brought upon the scene a seigneur, in a barque, and together we drifted upon an enchanted stream, till the seigneur pronounced a forbidden word that broke the magic. So the boat was miraculously overturned, and the rich cargo scattered—rugs of Smyrna, cushions of Tyrian purple, brocades of Damascus—but Saint Cunegond preserved us. Then came the troubadour, from whom you rescued me, and, with the caparison of his charger, he caught me as in a net, and drew me to shore. The seigneur—Saint Ragonde protect him!—went on with the stream."

The admiral listened, spellbound and puzzled.

"The troubadour would have me ride upon his lavender steed, but the beast was possessed of a devil, and would not move. Then you came, most noble knight—" Margot looked into his eyes, and the commander of many galleons straightway struck his colors.

Again they proceeded in silence. The forest trees grew rarer. At the end of an open glade, they came upon the grille admitting to the enclosed gardens of La Bonbonnière, where fruit-trees spread flat against the sun-warmed walls, displaying green, un-ripened globes. A spasm of regret—the keen, romantic regret of youth—smote the admiral. His enchanted journey was at an end! He forgot his sixty years, his honorable scars, his grown-up daughters. He was a boy again.

"*Reine Margot*," he began, laying a hand that trembled on the sleek neck of his horse. "I—"

"Oh!" cried the distressed demoiselle, "here we are already—almost home. Take me down. I must slip in unobserved. My mother, the Lady Lord, would question me as to my adventures." She did not wait for assistance, but sprang lightly down, curtsied deep, held out her hand to his bewildered salute, and slipped, swift and silent as a flying mist, between the formal hedges, through the orangerie toward La Bonbonnière.

V

THE Vicomtesse Jeanne de Malèvique stood in the library before a huge ecclesiastical lectern, upon which, unfolded, lay a parchment scroll with miniature illuminations. The vicomtesse was a "blue-stocking" in her way, though she bore not the traditional exterior. She was slight, well made, very rose-and-gold, ravishingly gowned in an indescribable something of many ruffles, and, if her stockings were blue, they only matched her eyes, and, furthermore, were tipped by exquisite slippers.

Her particular hobby was the study of the history and traditions of the two great houses she represented. Born a De la Jour d'Estec, married to a Malèvique, she had found a wide field for her curiosity and ambitions in the treasures of a colossal past. She not only knew when, by whom, and how every acre of land and *objet de vertu* had come into the possession of the families, and what the public and political position of every ancestor had been, but her collection of letters and manuscripts relating to intimate and private affairs had led her to many strange discoveries of no small interest to history, had she been willing to reveal them. There were strange documents under lock and key in the Venetian linen-chests. There were forbidden books in the Breton armories, and correspondences, whose revelations in the days when their ink was fresh would have caused many a gory head to fall in France, were methodic-

ally ticketed, sealed and deposited in grim vaults.

She looked up from her perusal of the Byzantine missal before her with a smile of content. Never was stronger contrast than this of a delicate and beautiful woman with her surroundings of ponderous tomes and musty vellum. She sighed, ecstatically. "Oh, how good it is to be in one's own book-world again! The world that is any century old one chooses to make it, and where one can be in any country wished for! Time and space at one's command, and the company one most desires! If that isn't a definition of heaven, I shall never try to define it at all." She rolled the parchment with skilful hands, replacing it in its wrap of silk and in its metal case. "Now for a little glance at my 'Manuel' just to know I haven't been dreaming that I have him. Then a glimpse at 'Froissart.' Heavens! why have I been wasting time in foolish visits, at foolish country houses? Never will I do it again!"

A tap at the door, and a self-effaced servant bowed. "Madame de Colville desires to speak with madame la vicomtesse."

With a rustle and glide *empresé*, yet serpentine, her sister-in-law entered the library.

"So glad you're back again, dear," cooed the visitor. "I knew you would be here, book-worm that you are. I suppose you haven't an idea of what any one is doing or wearing—only what Monsieur Untel has added to his library, or that Madame Chose's extravagance will compel her husband to part with his collections." Madame de Colville kissed Jeanne on both cheeks, taking care not to remove the rouge from her own lips. "Come out of doors," she insisted. "I cannot understand this house mania of yours."

The vicomtesse turned reluctantly from her treasures, and followed in the foamy wake of Madame de Colville's train. They crossed the great hall and the *salle des gardes*, went down the corridor, and made their way from the historic pile to the English garden,

where a tennis-court spread lines of trenchant white upon the velvet green of the turf. A rustic tea-table and wicker chairs grouped in the protecting shade of huge, trim-clipped hedges, invited repose.

From this vantage point not only the game, but the approaches to the château, and the Gothic wing opening from the picture-gallery could be seen.

Madame de Colville settled herself comfortably, but the constraint that had held her indoors did not disappear. Silently she prodded the turf with the white-enameled point of her parasol.

"And what is new?" asked the vicomtesse, with a tinge of incipient weariness in her tones. She hated banal gossip, and knew to a sickening point the inevitable turns and twists of petty feuds and factions.

Madame de Colville tipped up her nose and looked away, with an affectation of tact.

"You know I was against your letting La Bonbonnière from the very first."

"I know. But that was to oblige Adelaide. She didn't expect to leave then, and she was so anxious to have her friends near her. There was no other house. Then, too, I thought these Americans might be an addition to our little society. There's nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Oh, the place is well kept up. They haven't tried to wash off the panels with patent soap, or snip souvenirs from the embroideries—but, my dear, they are absolutely and completely dreadful!"

The hostess sat up in amaze.

"And lifelong friends of Adelaide's! It's impossible! You may not like them, or find them sympathetic—and that, of course, is a matter of personal magnetism—but that they are dreadful! I—why, it can't be!"

"Of course, I might have known you'd see it that way!" Madame de Colville's irritation was obvious. "They have simply upset the whole neighborhood. The mother is a swear-

ing, blustering person, who demands champagne at all hours—and she cheats at cards! The abbé is—well, a libertine, a scandal-monger—witty, I admit, but with no regard for decency. The aunt—*ma chère!* if you could see her wine-colored hair and hear the stories she tells—not in small gatherings only, mind you, but right before our girls, the children, the servants! And, besides, she is openly infatuated with the preposterous priest! And the daughter! The daughter! I cannot find words! It is a scandal—an outrage to the whole community! Imagine it! This very morning, at dawn, I was awakened by baying and shouts—it's not the hunting season and I was startled. I rushed to the window. There, streaming across the park, was the whole pack—men and dogs, and one woman—Miss Weson-Lor—chasing an anise-seed bag, I heard afterward—alone at that hour, riding like mad, with d'Alencourt and Etrevelle and the admiral, Collincourt, du Vigny—the whole troupe, and not another woman! And that is but one thing—a trifle. That she is mad, is the kindest thing one can say of her. She indulges her vagabond fancy as if her whims were the country's laws. Rides at midnight, dances at midday, refuses to wear a hat, orders a dinner-party at eight in the morning—in fact, simply defies convention, reason, decency!"

The vicomtesse was for once amazed. "How extraordinary! What can it mean! Adelaide told me—why, I can repeat her very words—'They are frightfully conventional, and will probably be shocked at everything at first. Margot is as beautiful as the dawn, and has about as much life as a wooden Saint Anne. But you will find them charming when you have broken down their immaculate, starched barriers! That's what she said, and you know Adelaide as well as I do. What could have been her object in misrepresenting these people?—she who never misrepresents anything! It's a mystery. I can't believe it!'"

"You needn't take my word, of

course," said Madame de Colville, testily. "What I am imparting to you is not exclusive information. It's the common talk from here to Rouen. You don't imagine that any effort has been made by these American-circus protégées of Adelaide's and yours, to be unobserved. They simply do not seem to imagine that adverse criticism can be made. They do not appear to be aware of the existence of any one except those whom they choose to recognize as equals—imagine it!—*quel toupet!* There's only one thing to do—cancel that lease!"

"And Adelaide?" objected Jeanne.

"That can't be helped. She has no right to allow such people the shelter of her name and ours."

"But there must be some mistake! Adelaide distinctly said——"

"Adelaide! Adelaide!" Madame de Colville snapped, angrily. "Do as you please, of course, but I fancy when my brother returns he will not quote Adelaide."

She rose as she spoke and turned toward the walk that led to the terrace stair. Below, stood her miniature victoria with its charming roars. The lavender automobile was at present in disgrace.

"Yolande!" called the vicomtesse, gently, "Yolande!"

Madame de Colville haughtily kept on her way. Her sister-in-law started in pursuit, but paused with wrinkled brows.

"What can it mean?" she murmured.

Below, on the driveway, the crunch of approaching wheels announced a new arrival. A smart trap bowled up, driven by Madame du Cailland; with her was Blanche Thou. There were greetings as Madame de Colville posed gracefully by the carriage steps. The ladies descended, and the late visitor, settling back among her cushions, was driven rapidly away. The vicomtesse walked to the overhanging balustrade, and waved a beckoning hand.

"Come through the château," she called, "and avoid the steps—it's easier."

A moment later she was over-

whelmed in a flutter of feminine welcome.

"How glad we all are that you've come!" exclaimed Blanche. "Elise and I simply couldn't wait another minute, though I'm sure you wanted to rest and retire to the library for a day or so before you bothered with any of us."

"No, indeed," said the vicomtesse, cordially. "I'm just as glad as you are, and, moreover, glad that you are glad. Come, let us have a nice long chat. Yolande has been telling me a few of the happenings, but"—Blanche and Elise exchanged a quick glance that did not escape their hostess—"she seems very much disturbed over my tenants of La Bonbonnière."

Madame du Cailland's smile broadened.

"Your sister-in-law has lost a poet. Renaud no longer dedicates odes and songs and rondeaus to his garlanded Yolande. The queen is dead! Long live the queen! And that is the Queen Margot. But if she has lost a poet, I have lost a husband, Blanche has lost a brother, you have lost—though you may not know it yet—a whole regiment of adorers. So all this bitterness of Yolande's is really selfish."

Blanche laughed.

"Personally, I am an adorer, too. In all my life I've never seen any one so unutterably, irresistibly fascinating as *la Reine Margot*. You see, even I am content to be a lady in waiting. That's all the best of us can be, these days. Figure to yourself, Jeanne, a radiant morning, a romantic, maddening, moon-ridden night, incarnated in a wood nymph from Paquin's."

"I can't," said the vicomtesse.

Elise raised an eyebrow.

"Of course you can't, for she's like nothing you ever saw before! Strangest of all, she is absolutely French—yes, there is a chic, a daintiness, a—*quoi?* A Mignard gone modern and mad."

"But this Mrs. Wysong-Lord," interrupted the hostess; "I'm told—"

Elise shrugged expressive shoulders.

"It is perfectly true she gambles with open enthusiasm. She is quick-tempered, overfond of champagne,

intolerant, dictatorial—and, in spite of it all, I like her. We all do. She has a charm—perhaps we are all hypnotized, who knows?—but the charm is there. Even the flippant and frankly flirtatious clergyman has it; even the maiden aunt, who tells risqué jokes and has a tendency toward port. They defy everything, even the censure they excite. In short, you have inadvertently supplied us with a very interesting, not to say exciting, Summer."

"But this isn't like Adelaide," objected the bewildered vicomtesse.

"Oh, there," said Elise, "we enter upon a mystery. In my wildest moments I cannot imagine an intimacy, such as apparently exists. I feel I must be the victim of a hallucination. One thing is certain, though—I am of the queen's party, and so will you be when you see her—and when you hear her! She has a voice, oh, such a voice! It is soprano and contralto in one. It would charm the birds from their nests, the flowers from their stems!"

Blanche nodded.

"I would rather hear her hum to herself in that little way she has than hear Melba sing an aria. What is that old chanson she is always warbling? You know—it's 'Belle Isambour.'"

"'Belle Isambour'!" exclaimed Jeanne de Malèville, suddenly sitting up very straight, "'Belle Isambour'!"

"Why, yes, 'Belle Isambour,'" said Blanche. "Is there anything so surprising about that? You are pale! What is the matter?"

"Matter!" She checked herself, suddenly. "Oh, nothing—a twinge of neuralgia. Go on, tell me—she sings, then she—they are fond of music?"

"Mad about it. Why, they sent to Paris and had four Hungarian musicians sent down to play for them every evening. It's one continual concert at the house."

Blanche laughed outright, as if at some amusing recollection.

"Why do you laugh?" asked Jeanne.

"Oh, it is part of this delicious and impossible comedy that all the Tziganes are in love with her, too. You should

see their expressions when she is in the room—eight of the most lovesick orbs! And, heavens! what music! Positively the air is so laden with sentiment that, even I—I very nearly—” She blushed and broke off abruptly. “Positively it is an infection. You’ll have to have a thorough fumigation against love-microbes when they leave, or we shall have to make a detour to avoid the spot.”

Jeanne fixed her eyes upon a distant tree-top. “She is, I understand, rather tall, very slender, but not thin; has rippling black hair in great masses, which she won’t have powdered.”

“Won’t have powdered! Why on earth should she?” exclaimed Elise and Blanche together.

“Did I say powdered? I meant hair-dresser dressed, you know; very red lips, a brilliant color, long, black eyes, and a deep chin dimple.”

“I never dreamed Yolande would give you such an accurate description of her. She usually says she ‘can’t see what we find to admire.’”

“Adelaide has told me of her often,” Jeanne quibbled. “I will call at once. You have worked upon my imagination till, doubtless, the realities will prove a terrible disappointment. I’ll find a coarse old lady, a self-sufficient parson, a dried-up aunt, and a silly, impertinent little girl.”

Blanche shook her head.

“No, no, you won’t! The whole family passes all limits, and yet they are not *canaille*—no, there is not a trace of that with them. It is *un laisser-aller à faire peur*—but common? Never!”

“And with that,” added Elise, “always more outrageous in their own home than anywhere else, and invariably amusing, always well-bred, no matter with what cataclysmic actions. Imagine Madame de Montalou being sworn at, at piquet, with oaths strung together like beads on a rosary, and only smiling an excuse of her own inattention to the game!”

“Elise, I am dizzy; my head is spinning. This is the age of miracles!”

“Ah, my dear, give these people La Bonbonnière, present it to them, never

let them leave us—life would be too stale!”

“It wouldn’t be life at all,” returned Blanche. “But as to that, we may hope to keep at least *la Reine*, for mark my words, she will be the Duchesse d’Alencourt of Les Charteries before the year is out.”

Once more a troubled light burned in the grave eyes of the Vicomtesse Jeanne.

“So, our Geoffrey is in love! I might have guessed it would be inevitable. And she? Does she look with favor?”

Elise pursed her lips.

“With favor—yes, if one may say ‘favor’ of one who turns her glances impartially on all. There is not a word to be found in French, or in any other language, to describe such wholesale heart-slaughter. She is, at one and the same moment, shy, daring, frank, Machiavellian, cruel, kind, matter-of-fact, and poetic. She is all things to all men, except the thing they most desire, and that she is to no man, I firmly believe, in spite of Madame de Colville and the anti-queen party!”

“And with all this,” observed Elise, “we haven’t even inquired for your health, or when monsieur your husband comes home—what new treasures are on their way to the library, or who made that delicious pink, sunset cloud you are wearing—which goes to show you under what an obsession we have been laboring. I do assure you we need exorcism *in extremis*.”

“Don’t!” said Jeanne. “I am under the spell, too. I have forgotten that I ever had a treasure, or a husband, or, what is worse—a dress. I shall think, dream, talk of nothing but my extraordinary tenants. Indeed”—an odd expression crossed her face—“you don’t know how this interests me. I am actually afraid to think. I fear the moment when I shall be alone, and must work out the puzzle.”

Blanche shook out her skirts and rose to her feet.

“It would appear, however, you will have some time to wait before the awful moment, for I perceive Roland

de Montalou, who, doubtless, will entertain you upon the all-important subject, for as many hours, days or years, as you will consent to listen. We will leave you. *Rendezvous* with us to-morrow—a little *fiv-o'-cloque-de-rien-du-tout*—to welcome you home. Come, Elise, and let Roland pour out his soul in peace to his mother confessor. *Au revoir*, my dear."

A moment later, Roland was settled delightedly beside his hostess, his face aglow with affectionate welcome.

"But it is years, centuries, since you left us, and if ever I have needed your guiding hand, my good lady, it has been during this Summer!"

"So I hear," said Jeanne, regarding him with motherly solicitude.

"They've been telling you?" He glanced in the direction of the parting trap. She nodded. "Well, they haven't told you half."

"Big infant!" she laughed; "you don't know what they said."

"But they couldn't, not if they had talked for ages instead of minutes." He leaned forward, confidentially. "You'll love them, I know you will."

"All of them?" she questioned, smiling.

"Yes; all of them—even the abbé, and the aunt, who has *coiffée Sainte Catherine*. But you will understand when you see her. She is a whole band of goddesses—she is Aphrodite and Artemis, she is Helen of Troy, and Cleopatra, and Héloïse and Marie Stuart, and—I am going to marry her!"

"Oh, I see—you have embraced Mohammedanism."

"I might as well embrace something," he answered, ruefully. "We are some fifteen or twenty who are going to marry her—here's one of them now."

Jeanne turned and nodded as d'Alencourt dismounted by the hospitable door, reappearing a moment later in the gallery opening upon the terrace. His hostess gave him no time for the usual small talk of welcome.

"I hear you are going to marry," she said, seriously.

"Yes," he replied, emphatically.

"I am going to marry a reckless, untamed devil of an angel."

"And so am I," observed Montalou.

"Well, for that matter," d'Alencourt went on with a genial smile, "so are Esteville, and Monton-Muret, and my respected uncle, the admiral, and your lettuce-head of a cousin, Bérénique, not to mention *le petit Caisse*, note, and the Colvilles' poet. However, *la maman* and I understand each other."

His friend shrugged his shoulders.

"With the title and Charteries, of course, you win with *la maman*, but that does not alter my determination to marry the devil of an angel myself. I give you all fair warning—you needn't accuse me of duplicity."

"As a *parti* you couldn't be worse, you know," Jeanne observed, with friendly frankness. "Don't you love the girl enough to let her marry d'Alencourt and be happy ever after? However, girls these days know enough to feather their own nests, and we needn't worry."

"Somehow, I'm not so sure that she is the girl of these days."

D'Alencourt spoke slowly, almost reluctantly.

The vicomtesse looked up, quickly. Their mutual thought was like an electric shock. "Oh!" she exclaimed, as if to herself. "That would be droll!" But her grave eyes denied any merriment in the situation. "I shall call to-morrow," she went on, "to-morrow afternoon. If, as I surmise, you see the ladies this evening, you might mention my intended visit."

The rival suitors rose simultaneously.

"At once, I fly to obey your orders," said d'Alencourt.

"An excellent excuse! And we may be asked to dinner, if we promise to play whist," said Montalou.

Arm in arm, the rivals took their departure.

Jeanne watched them as they mounted their horses and cantered away together, talking animatedly. Her gentle face was clouded, her brow drawn in lines of anxiety.

"But this is the twentieth century!"

she said, aloud. "Not the Middle Ages! I'm foolish. I'm so filled with my historical researches, with strange bits of half-knowledge and mysticism, that I see everything through the fumes of an enchantress's incense. Bah! I must put all this out of my head and judge fairly!"

She drew a deep breath, and looked out upon the lovely scene with comprehending eyes. "Ah, my dear oaks, my beloved river—what you could tell me if you would! And you, my royal purple hills! You must laugh deep down in your rocky hearts at the little we poor mortals know, or even guess. What is fate? Influence? Soul? You have it all as much as, and more than, we poor little moths of a day." She leaned upon the balustrade, her chin in her hands, her eyes half closed. "'Belle Isambour,'" she murmured, "'Belle Isambour,' that's the song that Madame d'Agenson speaks of in her letters. 'She is always singing an old song from the 'Airs de Cour,' 'Belle Isambour,' and such is her charm that the gallants do proclaim it the loveliest song of France, have set it to a thousand accompaniments, and now the Pompadour is to have it acted as a divertissement in the Royal Theatre.' But I am raving!" exclaimed the Vicomtesse Jeanne, beating the closed rosebud of her fist upon the gray marble of the balustrade. "Jeanne de Malèvique, will you put into your head full of notions, the fact, the incontestable fact, that this is the twentieth century—do you listen well?"

The setting sun made an aureole of her hair, a flame of fire of her rose-colored gown. Still she stood, lost in reverie. Presently she began to sing softly a quaint, simple melody, childish, almost—but with a minor note that caught at a tear:

*"L'on va criant parmy le bourg,
Elle est morte, Belle Isambour,
Elle est morte, pour ses amours."*

"Decidedly I must see the doctor," said the Vicomtesse Jeanne. "I must shake off this—this—whatever it is."

But she could not free herself, and when the strokes of midnight boomed

from the tower clock, she was sitting at the vast library-table, a quaint assortment of eighteenth-century souvenirs spread out before her—bundles of yellowed letters: in a setting of jeweled roses, a portrait of Louis XV.; another, of a girl of exquisite beauty, folding in her arms a snub-nosed lap-dog; a box of rings, among them one with a table-cut diamond surrounded by smaller stones, set over a finely painted miniature of a singing canary; two faded blue bows with flashing buckles; a porcelain perfume bottle, a Watteau fan. Her slim fingers touched the relics of a frivolous, glittering, but none the less irrevocably dead, past.

"Ah!" she sighed, "is there a soul of laughter?"

VI

THE following afternoon the vicomtesse drove over to La Bonbonnière. The day was clear, serene, and balmy. The smiling landscape, bathed in crystalline light, was reassuringly modern, yet her heart beat hard, and her hand tightened convulsively as, at last, the cheerful façade of the villa came into view. The horses trotted briskly around the circle to the porte-cochère. Jeanne descended daintily—a frivolous mass of ruffles and chiffon, from which her high-bred face looked out with curiosity not unmixed with fear.

The carved doors stood open, disclosing the saffron walls and ormolu ornaments of the hallway. Preceded by the footman, she advanced, but paused on the last step, as a gleeful shriek rang out. A flying mass of blue and white, precipitated apparently from the ceiling, landed with a little thud. It was only Margot coming down-stairs after the world-old manner of adventurous childhood since banisters were invented. But it startled the footman so that he almost lost his balance, and rooted the vicomtesse where she stood, in unconcealed astonishment. There was a tradition—she dared not believe her eyes!

"Oh," said Miss Wysong-Lord, not

in the least abashed, "you must be Cousin Adelaide's friend, the Vicomtesse de Malèviq. We were expecting you."

"Were you?" asked the visitor, with an uncontrollable impulse to laugh.

"Not just at this very moment, you know." Margot's eyes twinkled merrily as she glanced at the banister. "Mother will be delighted to see you. She is playing tric-trac with the chaplain in the *salon d'or*. Do you know, I envy you this house. I love it! I've never been so happy before."

"I'm glad," murmured the vicomtesse, politely, though her brain was whirling.

A shrill bark almost under her feet awoke the echoes.

"It's only Reggie," said her conductor, reassuringly, stooping to take in her arms a tiny spaniel that continued a *sotto voce* growl of protest as he kept a watchful eye upon the newcomer.

"*Mon Dieu!*" ejaculated the vicomtesse, "even the dog! The very same dog as the one in the portrait!"

"Have you had your dog's portrait painted?" queried Margot, with interest. "Mama is talking of having her canary done by some celebrated miniaturist, for a ring, you know, to be set under a table-cut diamond."

The vicomtesse gasped. That ring! Only the night before she had turned it on her finger, with the retrospective sadness that the pale reflection of the joy and frivolity of the long-dead always brings! An uncanny chill crept over her. She had no time to think, however, for she found herself being effusively received by an elderly lady of fantastic aspect.

Mrs. Lord's formerly smooth and decorous white hair now arose in pompadours and curls, adorned by black-velvet bows. Her flowing gown of yellow and black brocade was cut low. On her still plump and graceful neck, diamonds glittered. Her slim hands were loaded with rings. From under the ruffles of an elaborate petticoat peeped tiny slippers with inordinately high, red-satin heels. Mrs.

Lord had been calling upon her Paris tradesmen for many things.

Behind the little table, strewn with cards and pearl counters, stood the chaplain, bowing gallantly. As he was presented he came forward, raised the visitor's hand to his lips, and kissed it with a touch by no means clerical.

Near by, in a silver wine-cooler, awaited an open bottle of champagne; glasses and a dish of sugar-wafers were close at hand. Every one was affable, polite, very much at home. The atmosphere was delightful, strangely electric, prophetic of something pleasantly extraordinary.

"Ah," exclaimed Mrs. Wysong-Lord, "it is a great pleasure to welcome the friend of our dear Adelaide."

Her manner was cordial, her acceptance of intimacy immediate. Jeanne found herself made one of the household as a matter of course; welcomed as a relative, as one of the blood royal. It was all spontaneous and natural. The surprise and superstitious fear that had held her on entering were gone. Although at every step her suspicions were confirmed, she could no longer judge or observe coldly. She was under the spell, completely absorbed into the charmed circle—strangely happy, at ease, as if for the first time in her life she had found her true level, her appropriate surroundings, her foreordained companions. She spoke and moved as one in a dream, and could never quite recall how, a few moments after her presentation, she came to be playing whist for a franc a point, with the beautiful, azure-clothed, banister-sliding "devil of an angel" for partner.

It seemed quite a matter of course when, the cards proving unfavorable, the hostess, through her well-rouged lips, swore—swore aristocratically, charmingly, with perfectly good breeding and comprehensive thoroughness. The Rev. A. Z. looked up with an indulgent smile, and raised a gracefully protesting hand, but was sharply advised to refill his glass and attend to his lead. Neither did the vicomtesse

find it surprising that Mrs. Lord's deal should provide the lady with a suspicious number of trumps, or that the card she turned should invariably be an honor. Each fact was part of the amazing condition of things. It was unavoidable, necessary. An hour later, when she took her departure, her gold mesh purse was very flat indeed—and that, too, was the inevitable conclusion.

When she found herself in her victoria once more she breathed a long sigh. In her startled eyes was still a vision, seen as she glanced over her shoulder while passing through the Boucher salon—the Rev. A. Z. Van Zeim chucking Miss Presby under the chin. She drove on awl with emotion. The occurrences that had seemed so much a matter of course lost their illusion. She panted with excitement.

As her horses pricked their ears, scented the home air and quickened their pace at the heraldic gates of Malèville, she met d'Alencourt riding his English hunter. She signed to him to follow. Obediently he wheeled, cantering in silence by the little victoria and its fluffy occupant with the strangely grave and startled eyes.

"Come," she said, breathlessly, as the carriage drew up before the château.

She led the way to the library, closed the door, and sank into a chair before the wide, hooded fireplace. D'Alencourt sat upon the table corner, and stared at the unlighted hearth in silence. The pause that followed lengthened to torture. At last, she found her voice, but hardly recognized it as her own, so metallic and sharp it had become.

"I have been to La Bonbonnière," she said, looking him full in the eyes.

He nodded.

"Yes, I saw it in your face," he answered. "And you think—?"

"I don't think—I know."

"But you see, it isn't possible—?" His tone was a question.

"I know it isn't. I know it can't be, that we are mad! But it's so,

nevertheless, in spite of fact and science and the laws of nature! And you recognize that, too, Geoffrey. You and I have studied the past; it belongs to both our houses—we know the intimate details that are proof incontestable. There's no doubt. But what is it? What can it be?"

He shook his head.

"I can't answer that. But whatever and whoever she is, I love her with all there is in me. I may laugh and jest about it—I may talk as I did yesterday with Montalou—but it has gone deep, deeper than I believed possible. You can tell me, as I've told myself, that I'm loving what isn't really there; a mirage, if you will—I love it just the same!"

She rose, nervously.

"I was afraid it would be so," she said, "but perhaps it isn't you—the real you—that is love-mad. It may be that part of your blood and brain that belongs to the Duc Alexandre, or it may be the nameless power that, in this instance, seems to control us all. While I was with them this afternoon I, too, became a part of their world—the—there is only the German word of *Zauberei* that seems to describe it. But, Geoffrey, what—what are we to do?"

D'Alencourt's face hardened.

"I am going to marry her, dead or alive, in spite of everything in heaven or earth or the powers beneath! If it's my ancestor who speaks, then I am all the Duc Alexandre, and no more Geoffrey! For I tell you, there is not an atom of me that does not love her beyond expression!"

"You are bewitched!" she cried, coming close.

"If you like. But isn't all love enchantment? Doesn't every one, when he loves, adore a phantom? Don't we all pursue a rainbow of the senses? Is my case any more impossible than a million others?"

"It is! It is!" she cried. "You must fight it down! We must save them! We must get them away! They must leave at once!"

"If you threaten that, I will pro-

ceed at once to carry her off, if I have to kidnap her. Her mother is my ally. I have already approached her. I think—I hope—Margot loves me. My only fear is—that the past will repeat itself!"

"But you mustn't do this thing. Perhaps you don't really love her. Wait till you know her elsewhere. After she leaves here, follow her to Paris—to America—anywhere, and learn what the real, the true Margot is. Don't be deceived. See, read these." She hastily opened a box upon the table, and thrust into his hands the yellowed letters over which she had pored on the previous evening. "Read, read!" she implored. "You, who know them so well—every word carries conviction not to be withstood."

With shaking fingers he smoothed the limp papers, worn thin in the crease of their foldings. He read on, his face growing more drawn and white every moment.

She watched him with painful sympathy, tearing absently at the laces of her sleeves. The minutes dragged by in quivering suspense. One by one, he read the faded pages. As he replaced the last in its faintly perfumed case, he looked up, and met her agonized eyes with a level gaze of determination.

"I know," he said. "It makes no possible difference."

"Look!" she cried, and held before him the smiling portrait of the girl with the spaniel.

"I know," he said again. From an inner pocket he drew an oval miniature. The same mocking face, instinct with life, the very soul of merriment and passion, looked up from the ivory.

"This was the picture she gave the Duc Alexandre," he said, sadly, as he laid the trinket in Jeanne's trembling hand. "Her name and his are on the case. You see, you can't tell me anything I don't know, or guess. And it can't be helped—I'm past cure."

Jeanne's lips trembled.

"Here," she said, slowly, "take it

back. I must think this out, and, I tell you frankly, I am frightened."

"Are we the only ones to guess this riddle?" she asked, after a moment's silence.

"I think so," he said. "You and I, only, know the whole story; you and I, alone, are fools enough to be convinced by what can't possibly be. So, here we are, a pair of dreamers—ripe for investigation by the medical faculty as to our ability to sign a document, and, I very much fear, unable to pass the examination." He walked about the room, his head bent, his hands behind him, for the moment lost in reverie.

"Well," he said, pulling himself together and shaking his broad shoulders, "this is the first time I have permitted the serious side of the affair to stand before me clearly. I've treated everything humorously and gone my way cheerfully. I shall return to the charge with the same spirit, but with added determination. I'm sorry to distress you, Jeanne, but I have always paid you the compliment of absolute frankness, and I will now. To-morrow night I shall force the issue. I will have the matter settled one way or the other. Even that delay worries me. I would take the field at once, but my mother comes to Charteries to-night, and I must prepare her for the step I am to take."

"I suppose," said Jeanne, "she has heard the gossip and of your attentions, and has come down on that account."

"Yes, undoubtedly. Her letter intimated as much, and, as you may imagine," he smiled, wanly, "she is not pleased—she never will understand, and I sha'n't explain."

"Will nothing bring you to your senses?"

"Nothing."

"You would better put this away."

He took the portrait from the table and gazed at it, fascinated. Jeanne watched him in silence.

Looking up from his contemplation, he said: "The first time I saw her was the night she came. Montalou had been raving about her all through din-

ner. My curiosity was aroused, but it wasn't that alone that made me find an excuse to slip away from him, and scramble across the park in the treacherous moonlight, hiding, like a poacher, behind the hedges till I stood among the roses of La Bonbonnière. It was the charm working then—it holds me now. I didn't know what I wanted, I did not know what I expected to see—until she opened her window. She looked out, leaning on the marble ledge, her hands folded under her chin. There was a pink light behind her that made a crescent of rose on her cheek. The rest of her face was in the white moonlight. Jeanne, I thought I should never be able to move or speak! Then she began to sing 'Belle Isambour'! It seemed that my heart would break, and with that song came something. It was not suspicion then, much less conviction, but a dim, struggling, soul-realization of the miracle. I sang the second verse, very softly. She paused, and listened, as if she had half expected the answer, then turned away and drew the curtain. That was how first I saw her. And from that hour I have been hers, body and spirit! Kismet!"

Jeanne took the portrait once more, and studied it, as though hoping to find some dissimilarity from the living counterpart. But the painter had been faithful to his task. Her voice sank to a whisper. "How strangely that old song seems to run through all this tragic comedy:

*"Mallade et morte m'y j'aray,
Porter en terre m'y lairray,
Pourtant morte je ne seray——"*

"Ah, no, she is not dead, thank God!" said d'Alencourt. "Though they buried her deep under an alien soil a hundred years ago—she had to come back to life, to France, and love!"

"No, no," the vicomtesse shook her head with energy. "It isn't she! It is the influence that lives here—in La Bonbonnière. When they leave, it will lose its control over them. They will be what they were before. It is not

the dead come back—it is their influence, their aura, their Karma, that has never died! I feel it."

"Perhaps we are both right, but either way," said d'Alencourt, "I love her!"

VII

THE Vicomtesse de Malèvique spent a wakeful night. She was troubled and ill at ease, even when, for a moment, she forgot the cause. Had it not been for her talk with d'Alencourt, she would have convinced herself that her reason was unsettled. As it was, she argued, such coincidence of mania was impossible; the next moment she felt inclined to bar the latter word from the dictionaries. It was with a sigh of mingled apprehension and relief that she finally despatched a note to her tenant. She would call for Mrs. Lord at half after three, and take her driving.

For an anxious hour she awaited the reply. It came—a charmingly worded acceptance—and at once the vicomtesse planned her campaign. She ordered the strongest horses to be put to the carriage, for she was determined to place as many miles as possible between her guest and the mysterious influences that governed La Bonbonnière. By driving fast, one could reach the turn to Coligny on the Dieppe road in an hour; then to the Croix de Berueval, Gontreau, and the long road home. She was fighting for distance as a condemned man fights for time. It was her only hope that she might pass beyond the influence of the unknown atmosphere—a chance, but the only plan that offered promise of success.

When the victoria drew up before the villa, Margot, in a riding-habit, was sitting on the steps, slapping at her booted toes with an ivory-handled crop. She jumped gaily to her feet, took off her hat, a saucy tricorne with a gold cockade, and made a low bow.

"I am grateful," she announced. "It was sheer inspiration that made you ask mama to drive. We have

been having words on the subject of my Cavalier d'Alencourt. Mama thinks I ought to settle down. Isn't that absurd? Charming afternoon, isn't it? Hope you'll find it so. Mama is in an execrable humor, and here she is."

Mrs. Lord appeared, followed by a footman bearing cushions, smelling-salts, and Reggie, growling protests.

"H'm," she said, catching sight of her daughter and stopping short. "Insubordinate!" Then, turning with a radiant smile to the vicomtesse, she nodded with an odd, familiar dignity. "Thank your horoscope, or whatever it is you thank when you have cause, that you have no daughter!"

Margot looked up, contrition upon her beautiful, down-drooping mouth, innocence in her eyes, the dimple smoothed away. "I promise you, I will not annoy you any more after this, mother—and I beg your pardon."

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the old lady, "will the sky fall? Will the river run inland? Margot, upon my soul, you are extraordinary! Cease your joking. Ha! ha! Since when do we ask pardon—not you or I, whatever else we do. 'Pardon!' What a farce! Good for servants and abbés—it's their profession! Ride your insane horse till he breaks your neck or his, but leave pardons out of the question!"

Mrs. Wysong-Lord settled herself in the carriage, Reggie upon her arm, looked a reluctantly affectionate good-bye to the vision of loveliness framed in the doorway, and turned to the vicomtesse. "After all, she is beautiful! and what right have I—have you—has any one, to demand more of her? When she is forty, we shall have the privilege of requiring wit, but not till then, and she will have it long before, or she wouldn't be her mother's daughter!"

Jeanne acknowledged the remark, absently. She could not force her lips to frame the vapid sentences of temporary conversation. She was choked with emotion, dumb with apprehension. What if, after all, her efforts

should be fruitless? She was spared the torture of small talk, for Mrs. Lord, taking the matter in her own hands, conversed with picturesque fluency upon local interests—neighbors, roads, incomes, taxes, peasants and stewards, showing an astonishing fund of information and an almost masculine grasp of each subject.

The smiling landscape changed its aspect as they neared the sea. Fishing-boats appeared upon the river, over the towns a veil of drying nets hung swaying in the breeze. An occasional gust of salt air tore the milder inland atmosphere.

Over Mrs. Wysong-Lord crept a subtle change. She sat erect, no longer lolling with easy nonchalance. Her language became stilted, less fluent. Her comments lost their cynic wit, her tones grew softly modulated. Something in her appearance underwent a transformation. The brilliant light of her eyes dimmed, the lines about her mouth softened and relaxed, a primness pursed her lips, where the rouge appeared suddenly out of place. The high arch of her blackened brows drooped, two deep lines forming above the nose. Character, the invisible, all-powerful artist, remodeled face, body, and manner, till before Jeanne's startled eyes, another woman was disclosed—a strangely incongruous creature, with Puritan eyes, overdone refinement, pinched lips and studied politeness, decked out in rouge and powder, loaded with jewels, swathed in extravagant finery, belaced, hair-dressed, perfumed—a personality impossible to describe.

As the victoria neared Coligny, the vicomtesse gathered her courage. Mrs. Lord was speaking. "My daughter's health and spirits have greatly improved since we took possession of your charming——"

"My dear lady," the vicomtesse interrupted, "you have never taken possession of that house! It has taken possession of you—taken possession of every one of you!"

Mrs. Lord turned, startled by the vehement accents.

"Why, in what way? I do not understand," she murmured, vaguely.

Jeanne caught Mrs. Lord's hand with a convulsive grip, as if by physical effort she might hold her, keep her from merging into the usurping personality.

"Listen—listen carefully. I must tell you the whole history; then you must judge for yourself. It's perfectly unprecedented, perfectly impossible, what I have to tell you, and, believe me, I did not let you go into the danger knowingly. No one, since the events of which I am going to speak, has ever occupied the villa, and who could have guessed, who could have dreamed of this visitation!"

Mrs. Lord gazed blankly at her companion. Then fear crept into her eyes. She glanced apprehensively at the lonely road, then with a sigh of relief, at the stalwart backs of the footmen.

Jeanne repressed a hysterical laugh.

"No, I'm not mad. Don't be frightened—at least, not anything so ordinary as an everyday maniac. But, listen, La Bonbonnière was built for Gabrielle de Malèville. She was very much admired by Louis XV.—you know how it was in those days. It was an honor—the king could do no wrong. She had a daughter, the loveliest creature that ever lived, but utterly ungovernable as her mother had been—as her father was. The duchesse—the king gave her that title—was—er—very fond of high play, and wine, and music, in which she excelled. With her in La Bonbonnière lived her sister, Antoinette, and the Abbé Peudal—her confessor and abettor in all her freaks of fancy—you know what the abbés of that time were. Peudal was no exception; on the contrary, a typical example. La Bonbonnière was a very gay little candy-box, indeed. They had a band of musicians, who gave daily concerts. They kept open house for cards. The duchesse made no effort to control her daughter, who loved the chase, her liberty, and the companionship of the wildest gallants of the court."

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A dawn of comprehension lighted the pale eyes of Mrs. Lord—uncertainty, fear, resistance.

Jeanne pushed her advantage.

"The king," she went on, "took the deepest interest in his beautiful daughter—the reckless, the fascinating, the untamable, little savage, Diane. A marriage was arranged with the Duc d'Alencourt, the great-great-grandfather of Geoffrey. He was madly in love with her, as his descendant is to-day with your daughter. Don't you understand?"

Jeanne read conviction in her companion's terrified eyes.

"She had shrugged her shoulders and acquiesced, the lovely daughter of the king. Then, without warning, whether from mere whimsical contrariness, love of intrigue, or because she really loved the man, she eloped—ran away with a worthless young scapegrace, of excellent family and impossible character. None ever knew what became of them. They disappeared completely. There is a tradition that they went to Canada, and settled near Quebec, but it was never authenticated.

"Ah; you see what I mean; I know you realize it now! They have come back in you, in Margot, in your whole household! You have been pushed aside—they have made themselves manifest—perhaps not even their true spirits, but some persistent part of the atmosphere they created has accomplished this. It is a mystery within a mystery. But now you are yourself again—and you must act! You cannot allow this to go on—this unnatural, this uncanny illusion. You must fight for yourselves, your very souls! Fight? No!—flight, is the only thing! Can one fight supernatural forces? Or, if it be natural, can one resist infection in the very air one breathes? You must go—all of you, and at once—at once!"

"To America, to Quebec!" Mrs. Lord repeated, mechanically. Across her face a hundred expressions passed. A terrible struggle was taking place—a fight for supremacy, a duel of impulses.

With terror and amazement the vicomtesse watched. On the older woman's forehead beads of perspiration gathered, her body was tense as a bow-string drawn, her stiffened fingers clutched Jeanne's hand with the grip of suffering. The wrinkled face was hard as stone and marble-white. On the livid cheeks, the rouge showed in blotches.

In silence the battle was fought—and won. Slowly the usurping personality lost its hold, the convulsive changes became less frequent, less intense. The lines of pain vanished, the body relaxed. For a moment, her eyelids closed from excessive weariness. Then she leaned forward suddenly, apparently unconscious of what had just happened.

"Let us go home at once," she gasped. "We will leave to-morrow!"

The vicomtesse lay back with a sigh of exhaustion and relief. They drove on—it seemed for hours. Jeanne looked up. The scenes around them had grown familiar, they were nearing the outskirts of the village. Soon they would be within the enchanted circle, upon the dangerous ground! A new fear seized her. She should have kept Mrs. Lord at a distance—have telegraphed her party to join her. Would she fall back again under the spell?

She watched her, eagerly. There were no outward signs of the long dead duchesse. It was still Mrs. Wysong-Lord, anxious, frightened and puzzled, who sat beside her, nervously tearing the lace from her handkerchief. Closer they came, and closer—in at the park gates, beneath the ancient trees, up the stately avenue, at last, within sight of La Bonbonnière itself.

With her whole heart Jeanne prayed, her hands clasped beneath the laprobe, her eyes fixed on the face of her guest. The dreaded change did not come.

They stopped. The footman descended. Hastily Mrs. Lord freed herself from robes and cushions. Reggie was tumbled unceremoniously

to the ground, where he whined shrilly. The vicomtesse followed, the fear of some unknown calamity heavy upon her.

"Where is Margot?" she heard Mrs. Lord inquire, anxiously. "I wish to speak with her at once. Tell her to come to me."

The servant bowed.

"Miss Margot has not yet returned from her ride," he answered. "She went out with Mr. de Montalou, shortly after madame. She begged that madame should not be anxious in case she were a little late."

"Montalou! Not anxious!" cried Mrs. Lord. She turned to the vicomtesse and stretched forth a shaking hand. "Do you suppose—? Could it be!"

Jeanne's face was sufficient answer. Filled with a new dread, the two ladies hurried into the house, up the stairs, through the rose boudoir, where the Watteau canvases laughed at them from the walls, to the dainty white-and-gold room that had been the case of that jewel of beauty—Margot.

The jewel was gone—stolen! On the dressing-table lay a note, neatly sealed with the Montalou arms.

CHÈRE MAMAN: I know you've set your heart on d'Alencourt, so it is no use arguing with you. I've married Roland, so *au revoir*.

Your dutiful
MARGOT.

Underneath was added in pencil, the last verse of "Belle Isambour":

*Or n'est il homme avec pouvoir,
Qui peut encor qu'il voye bien cler,
Engarder sa fille d'aymer;
C'est a luy folie en parler.*

For a flash the soul of the duchesse asserted itself. Mrs. Wysong-Lord laughed, cynically.

"Tiens! Roland will be surprised when he finds whom he has really married. I hope he'll like her."

There were tears in the eyes of the Vicomtesse Jeanne.

"Poor d'Alencourt," she said; "the end of the song!"

MATINS

AWAKE! the Dawn is on the hills.
Behold! at her cool throat a rose;
Blue-eyed and beautiful she goes,
Leaving her steps in daffodils.
Awake! arise! and let me see
Thine eyes, whose deeps epitomize
All dawns that were or are to be,
O Love, all heaven in thine eyes!
Awake! arise! come down to me!

Behold! the Dawn is up; behold!
How all the birds around her float,
Wild rills of music, note on note,
Spilling the air with mellow gold.
Arise! awake! and, drawing near,
Let me but hear thee and rejoice!
Thou, who bear'st captive, sweet and clear,
All song, O Love, within thy voice!
Arise! awake! and let me hear!

See, where she comes, with limbs of day,
The Dawn! with wild-rose hands and feet,
Within whose veins the sunbeams beat,
And laughters meet of wind and ray.
Arise! come down! and, heart to heart,
Love, let me clasp in thee all these!
The sunbeam, of which thou art part,
And all the rapture of the breeze!
Arise! come down! loved that thou art!

MADISON CAWEIN.



HE MAKES EXCUSE FOR HIM

PARKER—Your pastor doesn't practise what he preaches.
TUCKER—He hasn't the time. My pastor writes his own sermons.



SHE HAD HER DOUBTS

HE—I have a future before me.
SHE—But are you quite sure there is enough of it to atone for your past?

CHILDREN

THE GIRL-CHILD

GIVE her a flower to keep and hold,
 A waxen doll in a silken gown,
 A chain of coral with clasp of gold,
 A tiny kitten as soft as down;
 And sing, with your lips against her cheek,
 Love's dear lullaby whispering,
 Till sleep comes over her eyelids meek,
 Sing for the girl-child—mother, sing!

THE BOY-CHILD

Show him the bird in its daring flight
 To the cloud's brown edge. Teach him to know
 The flag that spreads to winds' wild night—
 Sweep of the rain, and whirl of snow—
 Laugh with him, run with him, romp and leap,
 Give him his will of the noisy day—
 But, when you pause at the gate of sleep,
 Oh, pray for the boy-child—mother, pray!

MADLINE BRIDGES.



TO THE WIDOW

L OVER—You, you see, are the only woman I ever loved.
 LADY—Oh, I can't believe that.
 "But it's true; the others were all girls."



QUITE SATISFIED

TRAMP (*to farmer*)—Can yer give me a job, sir?
 FARMER—No.
 TRAMP (*with feeling*)—Thank yer, sir.

THE DEAD MAN WINS

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF CONSTANTINE DIX

By Barry Pain

BINGHAM sacked his third foot-man. The fellow had got as drunk as an owl, and had been insolent. He had no character and he was a fool, so he came to London. There he hung about the docks, and spent what little money he had, and got into bad company. Ikey got hold of him. One night when Ikey had nothing better to do, he made the idiot drunk, and, while he was drunk, he told the plain truth about Bingham and the diamonds. I heard of it from Ikey the next day when he had found religion, and wanted to lead quite a new life. I am glad to say that I had friends who put him in the way of some honest work. The information about Bingham I thought would be of use to me.

If you inquire at Scotland Yard, where my name is known, they will tell you that I am engaged in rescue work and do a lot of good. They will probably add that I have independent means, and am frequently imposed upon. It may be so. I am not at all anxious that Scotland Yard should change its mind on the subject.

I am not attached to any particular denomination, but I trust that I am sympathetic with all of them. The Catholics have great hopes of winning me in the end; so also have the Non-conformists. Many an Anglican clergyman has told me that he wished the Church included in its folds more such workers as myself. I go about a great deal among the criminal classes in the poorest part of London. I give them not only excellent advice and spiritual consolation, but material help in

money or food when times are bad, and sometimes I hear of things from them which I think are likely to be useful, as in the case of that little information about Bingham.

I am also, as you may have conjectured, a thief. I have been a thief for many years. I have never been in prison, and I do not propose to go there. It is not really necessary if one will only follow a few simple rules. To begin with, I have never in my life possessed anything which the police would call a house-breaking implement. Explanation of one's presence, uninvited, in another man's house at midnight is only rendered more difficult if a box of silent matches, a jemmy, a drill and a revolver are found in one's possession. Without such tools it is impossible to attempt the opening of a good safe; but I never attempt the opening of a good safe. My pocket-knife contains all the tools that I require; and the place of a revolver is taken by what appears to be a simple cigarette. When I am taken, I trust that I shall behave civilly and like a gentleman; and I have no doubt that the officer will permit me one last smoke on my way to the station. Then that cigarette will come in, and that officer and myself will get a pretty object-lesson in the use of high explosives. Unfortunately, we shall not live to profit by it. I have never had a confederate, and I very rarely make use of a receiver; the only receiver whom I have ever used lives in Brussels, does not know my right name and address, is under the impression that I am a diamond-merchant, and would not dream of receiving stolen

goods if he knew that he was doing so. It is a rule of my life that the successful thief must in all possible respects live like an honest man. No dishonesty except on business. I have twice found valuable property in the street, and on both occasions I took it to Scotland Yard. I am one of the few persons now living who has never even attempted to cheat a railway company. I never avoid the police, and they are happily convinced of my philanthropic motives in associating with bad characters. I never drink intoxicating liquor, unless I mean to get intoxicated. This simple rule alone would have saved many men the sacrifice of their freedom. I do not believe in unnecessary risks, cumbersome loot, numbered notes, overruling ambitions or extravagance in living. If it is objected to me that I only go for the soft things, my vanity is not wounded and my common sense is complimented. I am investing my money as I make it, for I do not want to work all my life.

I am then a lay-preacher and an habitual thief. You will add that I am a hypocrite; frankly, I do not know whether I am or not. I speak the truth here; the publication of these memoirs will occur only when the truth can no longer injure me. And I say with truth that I am thoroughly in earnest in my rescue work. I have pleaded with these men with tears in my eyes; I have never preached without believing every word that I said. The police could point out to you men whom I have reformed—men who are now living honestly and in good positions through my help. I can help others but not myself. That I believe to be predestined. I accept the case as it is, and do not worry myself with introspection.

When Ikey—now for the first or second time—found religion, he naturally came to me. He told me what he had heard from Bingham's dismissed servant, and admitted that but for his regeneration he would probably at that moment have been looking for Bingham's diamonds. He seemed very

thankful, and his whole face was radiant. I regret to say that about a year later he again fell into evil courses.

The story that Bingham's footman—his name was Evans—brought to Ikey was rather curious. Sir Charles Bingham, as everybody knows, made his money in South Africa. His house at Weybridge was interesting, and stood in picturesque grounds. Bingham was rather proud of the place. He was at this time a man of forty and unmarried. He was fond of entertaining, and generally had visitors in the house while he was there. In the dining-room, the service door was screened off by a tall, four-fold leather screen. One night, after dinner, the butler stood behind that screen, and heard what Bingham was saying to one of his guests. It was nice, useful information, and the butler acted upon it next day. The shares went up with a rush, the butler retired on his profits, and Evans got to hear about it. After that, Evans used to be rather fond of standing unseen behind that leather screen when the ladies had gone and the men were talking. He heard a good deal. He acquired quite a collection of humorous, though slightly indelicate, stories, but he never heard Sir Charles say that anything was good to buy for a quick rise—possibly Sir Charles had his suspicions in the case of the butler.

One night Evans heard a guest—whom he always spoke of as the colonel—say to Bingham:

"What about those diamonds? Got them here still?"

Sir Charles said that he had.

"You'll lose them for a certainty," said the colonel. "Why don't you send them to your banker, or at least keep them in a good, strong safe?"

"I don't send them to the bank because I am interested in them and like to look at them. To my mind they are as pretty as flowers. I don't keep them in a safe because to do that would be practically to tell the burglar where to look for them, and the best safe is of no use against the cleverest burglar. My system is all right. At any rate, I have not lost them yet."

"Where are they now?" the colonel asked.

"In my pocket. You can have a look at them, if you like."

Evans also would have liked—very much liked—to have had a look at them, but he dared not show his head round the edge of the screen. He could hear the crackle of paper being unfolded and murmurs of admiration and astonishment.

"And where will they be to-night?" said the colonel.

"I shall hide them somewhere or other as usual. I am the last man to go to bed in this house, and as a rule I hide them just before going to bed. It's rather amusing to think of new places."

"It's absolutely childish," said the colonel. "How would you like me to go and look for them to-night?"

"You can, if you like," said Sir Charles, "on one condition. They shall be hidden in a place accessible to you, and, if you have got them at breakfast-time to-morrow, you may keep them. If you have not got them, you will pay me a sovereign."

"Good!" said the colonel. "I think I would take five thousand to one about anything on the face of this earth. You will lose your diamonds to-night."

"Think so?" said Sir Charles, and changed the subject.

The colonel did not go to bed that night. At breakfast-time, he handed his host a sovereign, and was told where the diamonds had been hidden. They had been under the coals in the scuttle in the colonel's bedroom.

Evans now felt that the diamonds were practically in his pocket. Every night he determined to hunt for them. Fortunately, or unfortunately for him, his elation and the strain on his nerves led him to drink, and before a week was over he had been dismissed.

This was the story that Ikey told me, and on the following day I bought a very nice hand-camera, and went down to Weybridge.

I took a cab at Weybridge station, and stopped it at the lodge to inquire

if Sir Charles were likely to be at home. I then went on up to the house. I gave the butler my card with my correct name and address on it. The commonest mistake that an uneducated thief makes is to use an alias when no alias is necessary. I asked the man to take my card to Sir Charles and request permission for an amateur to make one or two photographs in his grounds for a private collection. I waited in the big, square hall. I had only two or three minutes before Sir Charles appeared, but I do not think the diamonds were hidden in the hall.

Sir Charles came out from the drawing-room. He was a big, fat, lazy-looking man, with his hands thrust into the pockets of his light Norfolk jacket. He seemed to be slightly annoyed—at which I was not surprised—and eyed me up and down quickly. He was an ugly man, and seemed a strong man.

"Afternoon," said Sir Charles. "It's you that wants to photograph my place?"

"If you would be kind enough to give me the permission."

"I say, you know, I never heard of such a thing! It's not for any paper, is it? They are always bothering me, and I won't have it—I simply won't have it. See?"

"I have no connection with the press whatever. A friend of mine, General Tomlinson, came here some time ago to see you about a footman who had been in your employ—a man called Evans. You were away at the time, but my friend noticed the remarkable beauty of the place, knowing my photographic hobby, and—"

Sir Charles broke in impatiently.

"Evans was a drunken scamp. I told him he would have no character, and it was no good to send anybody to me." But I could see that the appreciation of his place had moved him rather. "Still," he went on, "I don't know why you shouldn't photograph if you want to. It is rather a pretty spot, so they tell me. It's quite understood that it is simply for your own private collection."

"Certainly, Sir Charles, simply for that, though I should hope to have the pleasure of sending you copies, of course."

"Thanks," said Sir Charles. He paused a moment, irresolute, and then snatched up an aged panama hat. "Come along," he said, "I'll show you some of the best bits."

I took two or three photographs in the garden, and afterward some time-exposures of different rooms in the house. It was easy enough with a little more flattery to lead from the one thing to the other; in fact, it was Sir Charles himself who suggested that I should photograph in the house. He became very civil, and wanted me to have a whiskey-and-soda with him before I went. I refused, of course.

The photographs turned out very well. I sent him a complete set of them, afterward, and he wrote to thank me. As soon as I was safely back in my cab, I drew from my pocket the wisp of green paper which I had taken from behind the tall clock in the dining-room. I unfolded it with the greatest care. It contained a few tacks.

I confess to some slight feeling of disappointment, it was not irritation; I did not swear, and I may say here that I have never used a profane word in my life. I had not got the diamonds, but I had got a variety of useful information. I knew for instance that alarm guns were used, and I had been able to see where the wires were stretched at night on the lawn and across the drive. I also knew, for Sir Charles himself had told me, that he considered a holly-hedge seven feet in height, and about three feet through, to be burglar-proof, which is not the case. The photographs which I had taken were themselves of use in enabling me to find my way about. So I was not impatient.

Having thought out my plan of action, I went down to Weybridge about a week later. I had left my motor-car at Guildford with instructions that I should come up from London to fetch it early on the morning of the following day. I reached Weybridge at about

seven in the evening, and went straight to the fields at the back of Bingham's grounds. I examined the holly-hedge, marked the best spot, and then went into the town to dine. I returned at ten, and got to work at once. I could see that there were still lights in the house, but I was out of sight and I made little or no noise. With the aid of the implements and my pocket-knife, I had, by eleven o'clock, made a hole in the hedge through which I could crawl. Holly is after all very easy to handle if you have intelligence and thick gloves. The full moon was now coming up, and I think I could have detected any of the wires, at any rate, on the gravel. But as a measure of precaution I walked principally on the flower-beds; flower-beds are never wired. There seems to be a prevalent belief that a burglar would hesitate to break a geranium or fuchsia. This is not the case. I walked round the house in safety till I got to the porch. I should imagine that this was ten or eleven feet high, with a square roof to it, supported on pillars. From the top of this porch, access was easy to the window of a little room which Sir Charles had described to me as his own study. I had made a photograph of this room at his special request; it seemed to be his favorite room, and I thought there was a fair chance that here I should find the diamonds. In studying my photograph of the room, I was particularly struck by a tall bookcase, reaching from floor to ceiling, and covering the middle third of one of the walls. It occurred to me that Sir Charles Bingham might possibly consider the space behind the books to be a good hiding-place.

I had already examined the ladders, and had found them extremely well chained and locked. The lock would have presented no great difficulty to me, but there was very likely some electrical alarm attached. The place where they were kept was suspicious, and I did not like it, so I left the ladders alone, and trusted to my skill in throwing the noose and in climbing a rope to get me to the top of the porch.

The rope I was carrying in a coil under my waistcoat. I succeeded at the first attempt in noosing a projection of the parapet that ran round the roof of the porch. Funnily enough, I did not like this; things were going too easily; that always makes me suspicious. However, up I went and tried the study window. It was bolted, and, when I slipped my knife in and forced back the spring, it went with a snap that might have aroused the seven sleepers. I lay flat on my face in the shadow and waited. I could not hear a sound, and not a glimmer of light appeared anywhere. Again I felt that I had been too lucky. I slid the lower sash of the window softly upward, and stepped into the room. I could see the bookcase clearly in the moonlight, and put my hand at hazard behind a row of handsomely bound volumes on the middle shelf. My hand came down on a soft chamois-leather bag. I could feel the diamonds in it. I was absolutely certain that I had got them, and as certain that I should not keep them. This last stroke of luck frightened me.

As I withdrew my hand with the chamois bag in it, it struck against a little knob that slid back easily, and immediately the bookcase began to move. I guessed what had happened. The bookcase screened an entrance into another room and moved easily, though very slowly, by some mechanical device. I had inadvertently struck my hand against the knob which set the machinery in motion. Almost immediately, I saw a thin streak of light running half-way up the wall and gradually widening. The next room was therefore lighted. I felt in my waistcoat-pocket to see if that special cigarette to be used in cases of desperation was still in its proper place, and then stood back in the shadow and awaited events. The bookcase moved back until it disclosed a full-sized doorway, but with no door in it, and through this the light streamed into the room where I was standing. And with the

light there came a strong scent of lilies and gardenias, heavy and oppressive.

All this had happened in absolute silence, except for the slight grunting of the machinery as the bookcase moved. I stood and waited, counting very slowly in my head. I counted up to five hundred, and still there was no sound of movement from the next room. The silence indeed seemed to be more intense than ever. I stepped out of my corner and into the lighted doorway.

This room was a bedroom. On a small, and I should say cheap, iron bedstead in the middle of the room lay the dead body of Sir Charles. I shall not describe him; a fat man does not look pretty when he is dead. The half-closed eyes seemed to be looking straight at me. The windows were heavily curtained, and on the bed itself and on the floor were masses of white flowers; the electric light was full on and, in addition, a row of tall candles blazed at the head of the bed. I drew the chamois-leather bag from my pocket, and emptied out the diamonds into the palm of my hand. They were few in number but magnificent in size and quality. I should say that the colonel had decidedly underestimated them when he put their value at five thousand pounds.

I put the diamonds back in the bag, advanced toward the body, and put the bag with the diamonds in it in the horrible, pasty hand of the dead man. Then I went out.

With the living it is another affair, but the dead man wins, so far as I am concerned. I would not that night have taken one farthing from him for any consideration. I found my way back safely to the field, and wandered about for hours until the dawn came. A little later, I got an early train on to Guildford, but I did not take the motor-car back to London at once. I went to the principal hotel and ordered a bedroom. I needed rest. And it had also become necessary for me to get intoxicated.



A MEMORY OF NICARAGUA

By Joaquin Miller

YOU lift your face to ask of her,
This wine-hued woman, warm sun-maid,
Who loved, who dared, was not afraid—
Or Princess? Priestess? Prisoner?
I never knew or sought to know;
I cared not what she might have been;
I only knew she was such queen
As only death could overthrow.

I loved, loved purely, loved profound,
I raised love's temple, round by round.
I built my temple heavens high,
Then shut the door, and she and I
Forgot all things, all things save one,
Beneath the hot path of the sun.

I would I could forget, and yet
I would not to my death forget.
I reared my temple to the sky,
That glad full moon, and laughed that I
Could toy with lightning, till I found,
Like some poor fool who toys with fire,
And counts him stronger than desire,
My temple burning to the ground.

Aye, I had knelt, as priest might kneel
Before his saint's shrine, all that day;
Had dared to count me strong as steel
To stand for aye, clean, tall and white.
Yet I broke in that very night,
And stole shewbread and wine away.

I would forget that scene, that place,
I would forget that pleading face,
Yet hide it deepest in my heart,
As coffin in the heart of earth—
Alas! a heart so little worth—
Locked iron doors and somber lid!
Yea, I would have my shrine so hid,
So sacred and so set apart,
That only I might enter in,
Each sleepless, penitential night,
And, kneeling, burn my lorn love light
To burn away my bitter sin.

CUPID IN SABLES

By Kate Jordan

(Mrs. F. M. Vermilye)

THE little hidden-away street where Dolly had rented a room edged on Washington Square. To be "cheek by jowl" with this aristocratic quadrangle counted for nothing; just the turning of the corner made a gulf between the two. The Square seemed always turning away its head; the little street seemed turning up its nose. The Square had no acquaintance of any sort with the little street; the little street did not care a pin. It was frankly a happy vagabond, boasting of one old furniture-shop, one old book-shop, a delicatessen-shop and a French circulating-library whose windows were bright with *chic*, Parisian posters. All the houses on it were rented piecemeal to poor artists who were happy to fancy that the little street resembled the rue des Saints Pères, and, dreaming of Paris as they leaned from their windows in the vaporous, Spring twilights, they were not interested in, and did not envy, the victorias and broughams they saw pause before the staid, red-brick mansions glittering along the Square.

Dolly came eastward between the green grass-plots one Spring afternoon, four small parcels in her arms. She had been in a dusty, ink-spattered office in Park Row since the morning. Now, tired, happy, shabby, expectant, hungry, without one full dollar in her purse, without a cloud on her soul, her heart singing, her lips smiling, she was hurrying home to the square room on the top floor back of a rakish little house on the little street that did not care a pin.

It was hard to unlock the door with her dinner in her arms, but she succeeded after a little trouble, and stepped in to find the sunset over the clothes-lines transfiguring her room to a pastel in red wash. She took off her hat, and pushed the cheese-cloth curtains at the window further apart, and stood with her face lifted to the light.

She was an unusual type. Seen among a throng, her face was like an orchid among garden flowers. Her charm was a puzzling, irritating quality born of the defects rather than the prettiness, and two people rarely defined it alike. She might please much or little, but she could not be ignored. She was always attentively watched. Her head was as smooth and lustrous as a mouse's coat and of the same pale, nutmeg shade which seemed to melt into lighter tones to supply the *bisque* of her skin; her features were negative in modeling, yet pleasing; her small, deeply curved mouth the palest coral, gray-pink at times, with little flecks of golden down at the corners; long, ash-blond lashes fringed her oddly slanting eyes of the most dreamy, misty, vivid blue. As she looked at the sunset, she smiled a little to one side, the soft, curled lashes veiling her eyes. There was something sphinx-like about the little face. She might have posed for the mystery of woman as she stood so, the splendid red flare bathing her. A sigh came with the thought that it was almost a challenge to misfortune for a human being to be quite as happy as she was, and it was almost appalling to think that in

another hour she would be still happier, if that were possible.

She began to unwrap the packages. From one of the papers, she took a triangle of Port du Salut, from another, a bottle of claret, from another, a head of young, green lettuce, curly and crisp to the point of unreality, as if it had tumbled from an idyllic water-color, from another, a small quantity of mushrooms.

"What a blessing it is to be a born cook," said Dolly, her finger on her lip; "with the creamed oysters, toast and coffee added to these, it will be a birthday dinner such as never was—and, oh, the dear will lecture me deliciously for extravagance."

She got out of her street clothes hurriedly, and into a new gown of pink, sprigged muslin, of nun-like simplicity.

"Oh, Tommy, Tommy Atkins——"

she kept humming, and, catching up a crayon, she began making large capitals on the brown wrapping that held the cheese:

"DINNER AT SEVEN.
EXCELLENT TABLE D'HÔTE.
SURPASSING COFFEE.
NO MUSIC."

She put a large pin through the top of this, and stepped into the hall. This upper space had once been the attic; the stairway came up in the centre, and five doors pierced the square around it. Dolly tiptoed to the one opposite her own. Midway on the panels there was a small, brass plate with a name on it—"Victor Trent." Just above this, she pinned the paper, and was about to knock, preparatory to a speedy flight, when the door was pulled suddenly back, and a man who was coming out stood still. He was young, strongly and gracefully made, his face boyish. His hair was a sleek, lustrous black, his eyes a soft, yet dominant brown. At this moment, he was half-shaven, a razor in one hand, one cheek of pallid smoothness, the other a mass of bubbly, white lather. He wore a loose-belted blouse which hung open, showing his throat, and his ex-

pression was one of blank amazement. They stared for a moment, and then both laughed.

"Of course, you had to open the door and spoil my advertising scheme," Dolly said, edging away.

"Of course," said Victor, "you had to cramp my style by this unexpected and amazing liberty. I meant to be so beautiful to-night—but you'll never forget this mug."

"May a lady ask if you meant to wander from your own fireside that way?" Dolly asked, her head on the side, as she still backed toward her own door.

"I meant to look from the hall window at the church clock in order to be on time"—he smiled over the soap—"as my watch is still on a visit to Uncle Goldberg. How was I to know that on my very threshold I'd run into a bill-poster?" He tore down the announcement, and glared at it with rolling eyes. "No music?" he snorted, starting back and brandishing the razor. "Ah, heaven, unsay those words. No music—no 'Margarita,' no 'Under the Bamboo Tree,' no Bill Bailey asked to come home, no 'Hiawatha'—ah, ah, it is too much, too much!" He staggered back with a smothered cry, and shut the door to the sound of Dolly's laughter.

As she was about to reënter her own room, the German janitress called from the foot of the stairs:

"Miss Smith, a letter just come for you alretty mit ten cents to pay. Ach, how some peoples are snide on their letters, ain't it?"

Dolly went down a few steps, and leaned over the banisters.

"I'll give you the pennies in the morning when I pay for the milk," she smiled, and received the London letter from the pudgy hand.

When she was again in her own room, she took the precaution of locking the door before opening the envelope:

15 HALF MOON STREET,
LONDON.

MY DEAR DOROTHEA:

The small sum you asked for I enclose. Are you sure it is enough? How can you

possibly exist on so little money? Do let me send you on some thousands for an emergency. Dear Dorothea, if you should fall ill! The thought haunts me at night. You may regard my suggestions as superfluous, for, in a way, though your mother's lifelong friend, I am your paid dependent—but really—really—you ought to come home. Your place is here. Your social duties are here. You don't want to be called eccentric—do you? No young woman does. But this mysterious absence in America, this assumed name, this juggling with poverty is—well, really it might be called sensational—such a thing as those awful newspaper women do and then write about. Have you not had enough of the adventure by this time? Hasn't your reckless, impatient mood died a natural death? What can I say more? I am distressed to think of you, a Lanesborough, doing this wild thing, and trust you will return to your own world without delay.

Meanwhile, I assure you I have kept your secret absolutely. Bailey & Pimlo were most reasonable, and did not press me for particulars. As you directed, they will let your income accumulate, awaiting your orders, and as the balance you left in the bank in my name has hardly been touched by you, it would appear that I shall not have to apply to them for money for some time. Your Uncle Benjamin was almost rude to me when I refused to give him your address. He has gone to Homburg, very angry. Oh, my dear Dorothea, what in the world are you doing? Pray don't let your originality or whatever name you have for it, lead you to make a grave mistake. I shall await your next letter with much anxiety.

Faithfully yours,

EMILY OSGOOD.

P. S.—Surely you won't go on the stage.

Dolly fingered the letter, her vaporous, blue eyes looking dreamily into the dusk. She saw London on a foggy day, the sun a copper disk; phantasmal squares; the ghosts of hansoms; she heard smothered sounds as from a world shut in by mist. She saw her home on Half Moon street, a bijou mansion, where fires twinkled and flowers made perfume and color in dusky corners; it was like a padded, scented case for a jewel of great price. In a mental chiaroscuro, she had a vision of herself in lace and pearls at the opera, of her carriage in the Park, the scarlet liveries, the powdered heads, herself weary and exquisite under a rose-colored parasol; she saw the pause at the rail, the chat of the marionettes of fashion, monocled and

listless—the sameness which had become irritation, the surfeit which had become revolt, until the decisive moment rang through her life, and from the men who had knelt in worship of her money, from the boredom of filling every hour with its allotted, dry and scentless pleasure, she had sped away.

That the result was happiness was evident as Dolly, after putting away her letter with its money-order for twenty pounds, prepared her dinner. Her eyes were shining, dauntless, and she laughed as she sang.

"Dear Emily Osgood," she said, aloud, as she stirred the mushrooms, "if you could see me now, you'd really faint. Poor Emily, whom nobody will ever love!"

When all was ready for the dinner, the room showed prettily in the mixture of lingering dusk and unshaded candle-light. Dolly never used the gas. She had bought four plain glass candlesticks; when she had a guest, she lighted candles in the four; when she wrote or read, two were sufficient; when she sat and dreamed, one burned like a star before a plaster bust of Petrarch's "Laura." She was never without a pot of flowers; an outlay of fifty cents kept her window-sill green for months. Her table was of the kitchen variety, painted white. Her bed was a divan with jade-green cotton cover and pillows. A large folding screen, made of Eastern matting painted with brown grasses, hid her dressing-bureau; that it was originally a clothes-horse, covered and painted by herself, did not appear. Her few cups, saucers, and plates were cheap, but of harmonious design and coloring. In fact, the back room, holding nothing that cost much in dollars and cents, was rich in esthetic selection.

Dolly's excursion among the poor had taught her one wonderful thing—that poverty does not necessarily mean ugliness. Those born with a sense of beauty and a desire for it, must have it, and carry it and create it in whatever spot they make their home through the valley of the shadow of

penury. It was this thought that made Victor pause after entering, his hand lingering on the knob.

"Green and white,
Spring and candle-light——"

he murmured, smiling at Dolly, who with her palms flat on the table was nodding at him over a bunch of mignonette.

"Is that your own?" she cried. "Don't stop. More—give me more."

"Sunset's flush
Like a rose's blush——"

He faltered, and added: "Now it's your turn."

"Fill the place," cried Dolly.

"Lacking Dolly's face,
It would be——"

He paused long.

"Well?" she murmured, as he stood with drawn brows, a finger on his lip, "don't stop just there. That's a horrid place to stop."

"It would be——" he repeated, mus-
ingly.

"I'm devoured with curiosity," she said, defiantly. "What would it be without Dolly's face? Something not at all nice, I hope?"

Victor sighed, ponderously.

"I'm very sorry, Dolly, for really all I can think of is:

"Bully place for me!"

"Upon my word," Dolly said, lifting her little head, arrogantly.

"I know that's awful, but the Muse has thrown down her bricks; in other words—she's struck—and it's got to go that way:

"Lacking Dolly's face,
It would be
Bully place for me."

"But you don't mean it?" she asked, with insinuating softness.

"Not a bit."

"Then I'll let you have some dinner."

Victor brightened. "I dare say I'll do better after dinner. I'm like Pepys, who says in his diary: 'I'm very cross when I'm empty.'"

He went very close to her and, his face growing serious quickly, looked

down at her. "I'm going to lecture you, Dolly."

"Why?" she asked, her delicate lips smiling, mutinously.

"For spending your hard-earned money. Good heavens, I *see* oysters and I *smell* mushrooms. Are you mad?"

"Oh, I love to be scolded," said Dolly, and added, in a little whisper: "There's claret, too."

"Well, do you know what I call this spread? I call it ostentatious. It's bad taste. It's flaunting your success in my teeth. It tells that penny-dreadful journalism and heart-to-heart talks with fair girl readers about their steady companies pay better than pictures for the funny papers." He thrust his hands in his pockets and frowned tenderly down upon her. "Promise you'll never do it again."

"Not next year, when you're twenty-seven?" she asked, as she took the chair he drew out for her, and began serving the oysters.

He sat down opposite her, and bent over the little table, a passionate question in his eyes.

"Next year! Where will you be then?" His fingers stole across the narrow space till they were very near where her own flickered busily.

"I often think of that," Dolly murmured, color creeping into her cheek and fading quickly, as if a flame had trembled there; "I wonder, too, where you'll be?"

"Wherever you are," he said, with quiet certainty and a long, level gaze.

The words floated about in her brain to a matchless tune. He loved her. She had felt it for months. She was sure of it to-night. She was sure, too, that this was to be the night of nights in her life. He would phrase the passion of his voice, the caress of his eyes. The joy, the wonder of it! What she had sought, she had found. What she had hungered for was to be given to her. Under the ripples of laughter and jest between them, this thought kept rushing over her heart like the still, deep pulse of the sea.

"Now tell me about to-day. How

many sketches have you sold?" Dolly asked, when they had tasted the oysters and pronounced them perfect.

He looked heavily miserable. "The question is painful. The art editors were cold to me to-day," he said, sadly. "In my own room, Dolly, as I drag my pen over cardboard and make lines that become pictures, I have a cozy feeling that Hogarth and I might have been the greatest pals, I feel my work so much like his. When I go out to peddle the stuff, I feel like a homeless cat on a back fence on a wet day."

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Victor! You sold nothing, and yet your work is really good. Are you—are you very unhappy?"

"Not at this moment, with mushrooms in the near perspective," he said with what seemed to her a hard, sad little laugh, while over his boyish face regret settled like a mist.

Love that was both passionate and protective poured from Dolly's eyes upon his bowed, humiliated head and, had he glanced up then, he must have kissed her for it.

"But you are sad sometimes?" she asked, in the littlest, tenderest voice, while putting on his plate some of the largest mushrooms.

Victor nodded sadly, without looking at her. "At night," he said, bitterly, "at dead of night. Oh, the black things come out then and sit around my pillow—and what they say to me of failure, of penury, of renunciation!"

For the first time, Dolly realized fully the vast difference between her poverty masquerade and the real, gnawing fear of the wolf with fangs which is heard nosing the threshold beyond the closed door. Her flesh chilled, a feeling of sickness weighed upon her heart. Wild words trembled on her lips—an offer of assistance, the promise of a future where she could help him develop his talent beyond the gaunt, gray land of Need and Struggle. But she checked herself in time. She could do this for the man who loved her. She could not speak of this to her comrade.

"Good heavens! we're growing mel-

ancholy," Victor cried with his lightest laugh, as he poured some claret into her glass and then into his own. "Ah, Dolly, we mustn't do that. When one's poor, one must cultivate the ideal vagabondage with its laughter in the very teeth of despair. There's always something to be thankful for. Remember that. So, though I have not sold a sketch to-day—nor, indeed, this week—you, my friend, having the lucrative post of Motherly Mazie on the *Young Girls' Needlework Bazaar*, which brings you in twelve dollars per week, are an agreeable thing to contemplate." He lifted his glass. "Here's to Motherly Mazie, long may she advise the young mind on the mysteries of drop-stitch and sentiment, long may she rake in that twelve per."

"Yes," said Dolly, as she sipped and laughed; "I was lucky to get that position. It's so easy. I'll read you a few of the letters I have to answer."

"Do, Mazie, do," said Victor, hilariously; "who knows but that from those pearls of thought I may learn to live a better life?"

The picture Dolly made with the nimbus of candle-light around her sleek, mouse-colored head, her lips curving into amazing nicks and dimples as she read and laughed, her slender throat with a luster upon the flesh showing above the low lace edge of her muslin gown, the glance of her cloudless eyes from the paper to his face, made a supreme invitation to love to which every pulse in Victor's body answered.

"They always send locks of their hair," said Dolly, opening one envelope; "they seem possessed to have you tell them the color of it." She held up a skein of very red hair tied with a pale-blue ribbon.

"I can see her," said Victor; "she thinks blue's her color; she has pink eyelids and splash freckles."

"Now listen to this," cried Dolly, pitching her papers on the table:

"DEAR MOTHERLY MAZIE:

"No doubt you have children of your own, and can advise one who has no mother to go to. I've never loved any one in my life, though I've gone with all sorts of fellows.

There's one that makes me tired, and my sister wants me to marry him. He is all the time sniffing. Do you think I will ever meet a man I can love? Please mention the color of enclosed hair.

"Yours in the depths,
"GLADYS."

"Next," cried Victor. "I've had enough of Gladys."

"One from 'Too Stout' says her face has a square expression though her features are round. She sends hair, too," said Dolly with a sigh. "But here's one I'll really enjoy answering in my best motherly vein. Listen:

"I've been going with a young man for six months. He is a train-despatcher. The other night, at a social, the conversation turned on getting married. A lady-friend of mine says to him—I put her up to it—she says, 'You are a marrying man, Ed.' He says, 'I guess nit. The girl ain't born that can get me into that con game.' I almost fainted. Shall I ask his intentions? Please advise.

"UNHAPPY PEARL."

"Are you going to tell her to ask him?" Victor laughed.

"No," said Dolly, shaking her little head wisely; "Motherly Mazie advises her to trust and wait."

They laughed again. As she put away the mass of papers, Victor watched her with a new seriousness.

"Dolly," he said suddenly, a dreamy, penetrating note in his voice, "isn't it wonderful that we two should be here alone and happy?—so poor, but happy—using our talents to earn bread as if they were shovel and pick, but happy? Don't you feel sorry for all the sad, heavy rich who sit at dull dinners waited upon by formal flunkies?"

"Are they all dull?" she smiled.

"Society is a big, respectable institution. Anything so absolutely respectable is stagnant. I mean that, if one can't give Conventionality a dig in the ribs now and then, and the old Adam in all of us send out a good, primitive yell without shocking the severely frock-coated and the perfectly corseted, it's dull."

"How do you know so much about society?" she asked, leaning on her elbows, an exquisite guilt for her masquerade filling her face with light.

Victor sat back and sighed.

"Yes, how should I know? I, who paint cartoons for five dollars apiece, and sell precious few of them? How should I know of that lush, stupefying content? Ah, my dear Dolly, I have the artistic clairvoyance and eyes that observe. I see it all so plainly. I've quite summed up the situation."

"Tell me."

"The rich, fashionable people who insist on taking life with a *sauce piquante* have to become freakish. The heavily correct call them fast; they are fast in the sense that they run like the wind away from the others. They eat much more than they need, drink ravenously, flirt feverishly with other people's husbands and wives, travel and dress at a tension, sleep little, read nothing, think nothing, do what they're told they mustn't, just because they oughtn't—all to get away from the dullness of ponderous, moneyed respectability. I don't blame them, do you?"

"Not a bit," said Dolly, with real feeling.

"I dare say if you and I were rich we'd have to join the gang which does the *outré* things, just to make life go with a breeze—wouldn't we?"

"I'm sure of it," said Dolly, her eyes sparkling. "At least I know we'd have to 'blaze our own trail' some way or other—if we were so very unfortunate as to be rich."

"But we're not rich," said Victor, his voice vibrating; "if we were, we wouldn't be here now, all alone in this little room, just you and I, without the ghost of a chaperon, shut away from the world as completely as if we were in a moated castle with the drawbridge up. Dolly!" He picked his chair up and planted it vigorously by her side. "Isn't it wonderful? isn't it happiness?" He put his hand closely over hers; she felt it burn and tremble. "It is happiness," he persisted, and bent closer. "I love you very much, dear!"

She tried to speak, but only his name faltered from her lips as he put his arms around her. He kissed her with

hunger and tenderness as he murmured:

"Love that keeps all the choir of lives in chime,
Love that is blood within the veins of Time.
Love that is fire within thee and light above
And lives by grace of nothing but of love."

"Oh, Dolly," he whispered, "we know this love. We are as gods. The world can give nothing greater, nothing sweeter than this."

She drew back a little and looked into his eyes.

"Those last words, Victor—'And lives by grace of nothing but of love,' oh, that's the best of all—isn't it? You love *me*, the woman, Dolly Smith, because of nothing material that I have or represent, you love the something that is I—*just I*—these hands, these lips, my touch, my voice. Oh, Victor, that's where the triumph lies for me."

"For both of us," he said, and smiled radiantly; "I have nothing but failure to offer, yet you love me. You are as poor as the little mouse I sometimes liken you to. We are Hunger and Thirst, but, clasped heart to heart, heaven lies about us." He took her hands and kissed each very gently. "God only knows when we can get married. I must 'trust and wait,' dear, too," he murmured with a whimsical little smile. "You will love me well enough to wait for me, Dolly, till I've accomplished what I must?"

Dolly felt stifling. The moment had come for confession. She had had no idea it would be so hard to speak. The Hunger and Thirst picture with heaven about them had the sublime in it, and she was going to pour over the tableau a metallic rain of pounds, shillings and pence. She could be silent a little longer, but it was unnecessary. The act had been played to a superb finish; there was nothing to be done but drop the curtain on it and ring it up on another scene. But she would never forget the poetic pain of her mental farewell to Dolly Smith, Motherly Mazie, Mrs. Schlitzner's top-floor roomer in the little street that did not care a pin.

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"Is it so hard, Dolly?" Victor asked, breaking in on her silence, his eyes anxious.

She laughed, happily. "Oh, not that—not that, at all. I could wait for you for a lifetime. But—" she left him and walked to the little desk, returning with something hidden behind her—"there's something you must know, Victor, and I want you to promise that you'll forgive me for my silence."

He stood up, his face very white, a vein she had never seen before throbbing between his brows.

"Forgive you? What do you mean? You make me afraid."

"Say you'll forgive me first," she said, touching his arm with her disengaged hand.

He put it away sternly. "You are already married—you've hidden it—you've let me grow to love you," he stammered, hotly and miserably.

"I'm absolutely free. I've never been married," she broke in, clearly and slowly. "No, it's something quite different. I'll risk your being angry—I'll make you forgive me. This is my confession—" She stood with hands behind her, her head a little lowered, like one confessing a wrong done: "I am not poor. I am awfully, hugely, overwhelmingly rich."

She looked up. He was staring at her with a half-awakened expression.

"Rich?" he asked, in stupefaction.

"I'm one of the big, English heiresses. You've seen poor copies of my photographs in the New-York papers many a time. I'm not a beauty, but because I'm an heiress they insist on saying I am, and at this very hour I'm on sale in Bond-street shops, two shillings apiece, at reduced rates by the dozen." She held out a photograph, saying, piteously: "*Me*."

Victor stared at the picture, which showed her in a riding-habit. Underneath it was printed: "Lady Dolly Lanesborough."

"Titled?" he gasped.

"That, too," she admitted, ruefully; "I'm very sorry."

To her amaze, he fell into a chair,

and burst into reasonless, wild laughter. He stopped suddenly, his face twitching.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "It's like a knock on the head. I think I'm a little hysterical." He dropped his face in his hands, his shoulders heaving. "I never dreamed of such a thing; I never dreamed of this," she heard him murmur.

She knelt beside him and drew his hands from his face. He stared at her with the strangest expression, and again laughed, helplessly.

"Why are you here?" he asked, at length; "it all means something—what?"

"Yes, I'll tell you," said Dolly; "I grew to doubt myself. I grew to believe I could never win a real love. I grew tired seeing men at my feet whom I knew were spending my money in their imagination. To them I was to be a payer of bills—a cheque-book with fingers to write a signature and a heart that didn't count."

Victor listened seriously, attentively.

"But you could and did win love for yourself, surely. You are so sweet."

"That's the tragedy of being conspicuously rich. How can you tell what is true, what is false? No, sweet as I am," she smiled, "I believe the golden frame I was set in was so splendid it outrivalled me. Men wooed the frame while lying to me. Once I thought—only a year and a half ago—that an unreckoning, poetic passion was really given me, and I was almost won." Her face was now hot with disdain; "I found out the truth. He had written to a woman—a woman he should have married—that he still loved her, but that his creditors were about to crush him and nothing could save him but a rich marriage. The woman brought the letter to me." She stood up and flung out her arms. "I made up my mind to take a new identity, breathe a new air. I determined to know the real Dolly Lanesborough. I would have time to study her, get into her soul. I would be able to learn her value as a woman, not as

a money-bag. So, I left London secretly. My companion alone knows where I am and something of my experiment. To the rest, I am vaguely traveling. I've only used my own money, and that sparingly, when I was really at lowest ebb before I got the position on the *Bazaar*, for it was not part of my programme to starve. Oh," she said, putting her hands on his shoulders, "it has been as refreshing to my soul as the wind over the Scotch moors has been to my body, jaded after the rack of a London season. You see I have the *wanderlust* in me, the streak of the vagabond, for far back in my family there was a *mésalliance*—a gipsy grandmother who, tradition says, used to steal away now and then from her castle and her stately friends, and go up on the mountain-top, where she'd walk barefoot, roll in the grass, and scream like a savage till the wild mood was past." She bent over him with a cooing kiss. "This was really my screaming and my bare feet. Oh, Victor, this life, where I've met you, has been re-creative. I am happy for the first time."

He met her gaze with a strange, confused expression and sat mute.

"You don't think this fortune spoils our romance, dear, do you?" she asked, with painful wistfulness.

"No, it's not that."

"You love me just the same, and it's the same Cupid, though he wears sables now instead of rags?"

He kissed the hand on his shoulder.

"Yes, dear—oh, yes—forever the same. But there's something I must tell you. I have a secret, too."

"Is it something that will part us?" she whispered in terror.

"I don't think so." He stared at her helplessly, adding, humbly: "I'm rich, too."

"Rich?" she murmured, with indrawn breath.

"That's just what I said a few moments ago," and he laughed again, a little wildly. "Isn't it like something in a dream that couldn't be real?"

"How rich? What do you mean?" frowned Dolly, who had not laughed.

"I mean, I'm a rich young man, ma'am," he said, with mocking humility; "not as rich as you are—still, rich. I'll break the truth to you gently. I've a personal income of twenty-five thousand a year, and I'm afraid, Miss Smith, I'll have twice that much when my father dies."

At this Dolly drew back from him, and sat down dispiritedly at a distance.

"You're not even an artist," she said, blankly.

"Yes, I am, but I'm a rich one. I must admit, much against my will, that I never tried to sell a cartoon, have never felt like the homeless cat on the back fence I told you about."

"You certainly can tell falsehoods glibly," said Dolly, with a flash of her eyes.

Victor gave a short laugh of derision. "What about yourself, Miss Smith, Motherly Mazie? What about that nice, perfect little novelette you gave me of how, when your father, the music-teacher, died, you were flung upon a cruel world to earn your bread—and, incidentally, oysters, mushrooms, *et al.*? I say! You can't get in one at me there. Why, you even did the emotional business when you spoke of your cruel lot in a way to make Réjane die of envy could she have seen you."

Dolly treated this tirade with scornful silence.

"What's your name?" she demanded.

"You've probably heard it, though nobody buys me by the gross anywhere." He took a card from a pig-skin case and handed it to her very gravely. "Victor Annable, my dear Lady Dolly. Father is a bank president, and he even owns a big steam yacht. This is very unfortunate. I'm very sorry."

"It's odd we both kept our first names," murmured Dolly.

"I'm glad of that," said Victor; "that is, if this dismal situation admits of gladness at all. It would have been awkward if I had now to think of you as—say, Maria, and I don't

suppose you could ever get used to me as—Sam?"

Dolly's heart felt empty, except that a little of the old boredom was filtering into it. Victor, as by some fairy change, had become transformed before her eyes. His manner was different, his expression was not that of the buoyant young artist, laughing at possible starvation. In fact, her ideal had evolved into just such a young man as she might have met in London under the old conditions. Change the outward look of the place, dress Victor and herself fashionably, and there was now nothing to make their conversation different from what might have passed current between them in the secluded corner of a Bond-street tea-room.

"Why did you do this? Were you afraid, too, of being married for your money?" she asked, with a little imperious manner he had never seen before.

"No," said Victor, lounging back and unconsciously speaking with a drawl that, except for his American accent, was reminiscent to her of Piccadilly; "you were following adventure in the abstract, I in the concrete. You'll be surprised to learn that I did it because of you."

"But you didn't know me."

"Still—because of you. Will the story bore you?"

"Of course not," she snapped, while her heart sorrowed for that other Victor who had lectured her for buying his dinner.

"Well, it was this way. I was bored. All the family had gone, bag and baggage, to Europe. You know the big red-and-white house on the Square, with the daisies in the windows? That's my home. I saw you pass one day. I paint portraits. You first attracted me as a possible model. To put your wonderful, pale coloring on canvas and the something that is elfin and maddening in your face, was my first instinct. I saw you again. The interest deepened. I began to watch for you and the interest became gradually human, personal. I did not

intrude; you did not see me. I began to follow you. I saw you come in here half-a-dozen times before a daring idea came to me, that made me feel like a social Columbus—to become a worker like you, share the same sort of life, get to know you."

Dolly began to feel a little happier. Matters were improving, since she unknowingly had been the instigation to his adventure. She moved her chair a little nearer. Victor's face, too, lost its listlessness. He looked at her very tenderly.

"We were to be like the happy vagabonds in 'La Vie de Bohème,'" he went on; "I dreamed of Mürger's people as I arranged my plans and rented a room. That was seven months ago. We met, as you remember, in a controversy over the ownership of a bottle of milk, with Mrs. Schlitzner as umpire. It was sweet, adorable, refreshing. But I was different from you in one thing. You have not seen your world since you came here. I returned every day to mine. I used to have my breakfast at my club or at home almost every morning. The empty house and the butler asked no questions about the mysteriously shabby clothes I sometimes wore. Really, I seldom slept here."

"You didn't even live the life sincerely while at it," she said, the glow lifting from her heart again and leaving her cold. He was just a fashionable young man as he stood up before her, nodding dismally.

"Don't think you're the only one disappointed. Look at me," he said, vigorously; "this smashes to smithereens one of my pet theories. I always meant to marry a poor girl. Rich men ought to, I think. I believed that somewhere a lovely young worker was being prepared for me by Fate. In you, I thought I saw my ideal little toiler." He laughed, grimly. "In you—in Lady Dolly Lanesborough! Why, you're even a bigger fraud than I am. You haven't a pinch of artistic vagabondism to your

back. You're not only rich, but titled. You see my position? Here I am, bound to a rich and titled wife—I, who always wanted to play the Lord of Burleigh to a poor girl—with better results."

The Lanesborough pride flowed over Dolly's face as she sprang up and faced him.

"Fortunately, Mr. Annable, the matter has not gone very far. Let us forget to-day. You can still marry your—toiler." The word ended in a hard sob. She went to the divan and plumped her head into the pillows.

Victor stood dazed, then, much to his own surprise, found himself on his knees, kissing Lady Dolly Lanesborough's left ear passionately.

"Look at me, Dolly. I won't give you up. Why—good heavens, I love you."

Something inarticulate came from the pillows.

"You love me, don't you?" asked Victor.

He thought the head nodded, "Yes."

"Then what fools we are," he murmured into the little ear. "As you said, dear, it's the same Cupid, though he's become both aristocratic and wealthy—and I'm the same, and you're the same—"

She turned her tear-wet face at this, and murmured like a sobbing child:

"That's what we must remember. *We're* the same—and the *love* was no pretense." She sat up and wiped her eyes. "I've thought of a lovely thing," she murmured; "let us always, always, pay the rent of your little room and mine for two real strugglers, Victor. Let us know that the people we played at being are really living, and perhaps loving—here. Shall we?"

"You're a brick to think of it," he said, with his arms around her; "but I want never to see this room after you've left it. I'll tell you why—the Muse has whispered something to me, Dolly:

"Lacking Dolly's face,
It would be
Night eternally."

A SPECIAL DISPENSATION

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

SHE slipped out of bed, but not altogether out of a dream, and trotted to the banisters—a sturdy, square-shouldered little figure, in a white night-dress and blue slippers and with yellow hair curling warmly against her neck. She sometimes awakened, and sent a whispered, "Good night," down to her father, and caught in return his murmured, "Go to bed, you rascal!"

But no one, except Jimmy the butler, knew of this reprehensible habit, or that it had occasionally reached the extreme limit of the library. Marie would have nipped it in the bud. But Marie's room was separated from hers by a closed door, and Marie slept as only the just, or a portly Swiss *bonne*, can sleep. Of course, her mother knew nothing of these nocturnal orgies. If she had, she would doubtless have said, "How absurd!" and would then have given it no more thought than she gave to the acknowledged idiosyncrasies of her husband and only offspring, or to the hundred and one of which they were guilty and she ignorant.

It was extraordinary how so perfect a type of modernity could have become the mother of a chubby, happy-hearted child such as Nancy—"A jolly little chap," her father called her, then perhaps forgot her for a time. But there were unexpected moments of escape, when she slipped away down to the library to curl in his great chair, or upon his knee, and when her direct, contented gaze recalled to him his mother, and a house set in green orchards, and a yellow-haired, bare-footed boy, who, as a

matter of fact, drove the cows to water every morning and night of his irresponsible life.

But Nancy's father and mother had grand-stand seats in the amphitheatre of modern life, where memory was crowded too far back for recognition. Meanwhile, Nancy enjoyed life immensely. Had she received more attention in detail from her pale, beautiful young mother, whose one spare hour a day was enforcedly given to the *masseur*, she might have developed, even at a few years, into a precocious and conventionalized product. But fate threw the child upon the mercies of a system of which Marie was the body and Miss Witting the head; consequently Marie, unknown to nerves, and of kindly intention, saw well to the physical needs of her charge, while Miss Witting's method was opposed to the ultra-development of the infantile intellect. Therefore, Nancy grew and flourished, through some secret of inheritance, into a self-reliant and wholesome mite. The day when she would miss her mother was not yet come, because, unless abnormally imaginative, we are not prone to miss that which we have not possessed. She adored her father, whom, through the illogical reasoning of babyhood, she called "Totty," and her richest moments were the glimpses at forbidden hours, or when Totty put his head in the nursery door on his way to a dinner, and paused for a suppressed romp, when she threatened to rumple his hair, which was as yellow as her own.

But Jimmy was her sepulchre of secrets, for, from the night of her

birth, Jimmy and the child had affiliated. It was then that the old man waited in silence until the young master had thrown off his coat and stood before the fire looking flushed of face and over-bright of eyes, as one who had been intent for too long a time upon a fascinating pastime. The old man stood at the door to say:

"It's a girl, sir."

"Nonsense, Jimmy," said his master, tolerantly; "it's cards, that's all. I played high and lost—as usual."

"It's a girl, sir, up-stairs," repeated Jimmy, "so Miss Millicette says."

"Who the deuce is Miss Millicette?"

"The trained nurse, sir."

"Oh, by Jove!" the master was still in surprise. "You mean—why, what the devil do I want with a girl, Jimmy?"

"I don't know, sir," said Jimmy, with grim truth.

"A girl!—How is Mrs. Wallace?" he added, perfunctorily.

"Doing well, sir."

"A girl!"—the master's brows contracted. He knew now that at some time he had known a vision of a boy—a big, college-bred, football-haired boy, manly and one to be proud of—but a girl!

"Yes, sir. I took the liberty of going up, Mr. Hal. You know I saw you when you were born. Miss Nancy sent for me, sir. I don't know much of young ones' looks, sir, but the nurse does say that she never saw a baby strike out so strong from the shoulder as this one, and at six hours old, and it did seem to me to have a look of Miss Nancy—of your mother, sir."

The young master turned suddenly and struck a match.

"Bring me a brandy-and-soda, Jimmy," he said.

It was a quiet house for a child, except when her mother entertained, and she had fairylike glimpses through a crack of the nursery door. Her father and mother were objects of supreme value and doubly so being

mainly unattainable. But with this idealization was no conscious need of affection. Her mother was an object of beauty and elegance, and the only creature in whose presence she felt a thrill of awe, not strong enough to make her daily visit other than enjoyable, however. This visit usually took the same order. She followed Marie in the morning, and bent to kiss her mother's smooth cheek in its nest of white laces, and heard Marie answer the usual questions pertaining to health. Or else her mother sat before the mirror in the boudoir, while the maid brushed out her long hair; then the child carried away the image of the clear, patrician face reflected in the glass with its unvarying expression of cold indifference. Only once did this change, and she never understood the reason; it lingered in memory, however, perhaps to be developed some day under the ray of maturity. It was all about her finger-nails, which, as usual, were not so immaculate as usual, and Marie received a sudden outpouring of rebuke which an acute listener would have deemed too strong for the cause that incited it. There were muttered words about inheritances, and Marie beat a hasty retreat to the ambush of the nursery, from which they did not appear until summoned. But this incident went to show that there is often lightning back of the most expressionless sky.

On the quietest afternoons, when Marie had the respite of a nap in a chair, the child sought Jimmy, and it was Jimmy who first awakened imagination, by telling her stories that were more entertaining than any of the Kindergarten Gems, or Young Ideas for Young Minds in Miss Witting's repertoire. She luxuriated in these afternoons with Jimmy, because he perched her upon a shelf that was under glass doors and cupboards full of unpronounceable delights, and allowed her to sit there while he polished silver and cut-glass. Back in Jimmy's museum of memories there were a river and a mill-race

where an unmanageable boy went wading and fell into a deep hole, and Jimmy slung himself out on a branch, and dropped after the boy, and was dragged down by the clutch of drowning arms, but managed to swim to shore where he lay unconscious from exhaustion.

"But I got him!" Jimmy would add, thrillingly. "I got him for Miss Nancy. But it took longer to bring me around."

This boy figured in all Jimmy's stories, and his mother took care of Jimmy after the drowning incident, and she bore the adored name of Miss Nancy—the same as Nancy's own. At the moment of climax, Jimmy would stop polishing, and the child would prompt,

"And Miss Nancy said you saved his life for her—"

"And at her dying bed I promised her to stand by him," Jimmy would interpolate.

"And never to leave him or let him be bad, but to take tare of him tause he didn't have no muvver!" she would add, triumphantly.

But for some weeks the frequent séance with Jimmy had ceased. The old man had grown strangely morose and uncommunicative. His lips were compressed in silence, and he went about his duties with the pallor of age accentuated by what looked to be that of late vigils. When Nancy stole down and climbed upon her perch in the pantry, Jimmy would only mutter to himself, bending over his precious charge of silver heirlooms which nightly he locked in a large safe. There were pieces of Miss Nancy's silver there that outmeasured in Jimmy's estimation the whole of the chrysanthemum-patterned dinner service. These treasures were always polished first, and put in the safe with a jewel-case that contained flashing stones.

But little Nancy was conscious that Jimmy did not prove so entertaining as of yore. He forgot often to tell her stories, and Totty, too, was quite unavailable. She had not seen him

for many nights, and then he did not play with her.

But on this particular occasion, when, after the manner of criminals, Nancy took advantage of the absence of guardians of the law, and stole out of bed, the blessed, incalculable sleep of childhood had deceived her. She little knew that it was long past the time when Totty had come home, or that Jimmy, the watch-dog, had slept for several hours the sleep of exhaustion. Her own sleepy eyes discerned a thread of light between the library portières, and she went down to it, and pushed aside the heavy curtains. But the light came from the dining-room beyond, where she supposed Totty was. So she curled in his big chair before the embers of a grate fire to wait and surprise him—she loved games with Totty. But fur rugs and warmth are conducive to dreaminess, and the dreaminess became a part of muffled sounds—the subdued grating of a file, the quick touch of silver against silver, the swift movements of some one bent upon a strenuous intention. These were woven into drowsiness, and she never knew that the sound which aroused her was the fall of a metallic object upon the mahogany table, then an exclamation, an oath, and Jimmy's old voice:

"Master Hal!—O God, Master Hal! Not you—not the silver, sir!"

Totty's strange, suppressed tones were ordering Jimmy to silence with a torrent of unintelligible words which only conveyed that Jimmy was being scolded, and she must wait Totty's time. Meanwhile, Totty was saying, passionately:

"I must, I tell you!—I am ruined—the cursed luck! It must be the silver and diamonds or a pistol, and only to-night to decide—she need never know. She'll think it common burglary—you know I'll not appeal to her—I wouldn't touch her money when she scorns me!"

And Totty laughed while Jimmy groaned.

"Master Hal!—Oh, my boy! I've

a little in bank, and the land Miss Nancy gave me—take it—but not this—oh, not this, sir!”

Jimmy was sobbing incoherently, and the sound drove sleep from Nancy's eyes. She wriggled down and made her way across to the dividing curtains, and drew them from one of the strangest scenes a child's eyes ever looked upon. An open safe, a bag upon the floor and pieces of silver beside it, a young man in evening dress, flushed, haggard and burning-eyed, holding a jewel-case from which darted back the rays of Jimmy's candle upon the table, where also lay a pistol, and, wonder of wonders, Jimmy was on his knees, the tears streaming from his old eyes, and he was apparently telling her father a story.

“... Miss Nancy's boy, and I promised her, sir—and she said—she said—” Sobs choked off the words.

“She said, tause you saved his life you was to take tare of him, and not let him be bad, tause he didn't have no muvver!” piped a clear voice from the door. The men sprang apart as from a shock, Jimmy to his shaking old legs, the young master reeling backward as though from an unseen blow. With a gay laugh, Nancy flew to him, holding her night-gown from her feet.

“I been waitin' to tiss you, Totty! but you was scoldin' Jimmy.”

Totty sank to a chair, as her arms clasped him, and she climbed to his breast, nestling warmly against him. His head dropped, and great breaths shook him, and he trembled from head to foot. Jimmy got to his unsteady feet and wiped his brow. There was a great stillness except for the child; the stillness of life's invisible battle-field, when the angel and the demon are wrestling, and one lies suddenly overthrown.

“Say I left it open, sir, or—or that it was me,” muttered Jimmy.

“Jimmy's been bad, hasn't he, Totty? Jimmy fordoot to lock the silver up! Jimmy was tellin' you the

stories about Miss Nancy, wasn't he, Totty?” the child crooned, laughing sleepily at Jimmy through her lashes, with the past-mastery of baby coquetry. Her arm was around Totty's neck now, her head on his breast, and somehow her thumb stole in her mouth—a shocking habit which Miss Witting had taken strenuous measures to break. Totty's breast shook strangely under her cheek, as her lashes drooped, and Totty's arms were straining her to him, as a man grasps at one hope of salvation. There were strange, muttered words above her head, of which she was unconscious. Jimmy got to his knees, hurriedly refilling the rifled inside of the safe. The jewel-case lay on the floor, and, as the old man picked it up, he said:

“It might have been done while we were asleep, sir—and—and you found it open. It was all my fault, sir—”

“Hush!” uttered the other, with rough hoarseness; “you'll kill me, Jimmy! Oh, I would to heaven you could! I've been mad! It must be paid to-morrow! It takes desperation to sink a man so low—but I would not appeal to her, she is so infernally proud. If she only cared—”

Jimmy suddenly closed the safe door, and its lock clicked upon its contents. The old man's gray head against the light seemed framed in a halo, only Nancy's half-closed eyes did not see it, and, as he looked down upon his master, the humility of his words was surely blazoned somewhere in immortal light.

“No one could have suspected, sir—it would have been me did it.”

The master groaned, and something plashed upon Nancy's hair, and then another. Jimmy's hand was on his shoulder now. “Sir,” said the shaking old voice, “sir, tell Miss Marian. It isn't right to live so far apart— Tell her, sir; I mean about your trouble. She may think you—you don't care, sir. She's young, and I think she'll stand by you—and, sir, there's the child.”

There was a sound at the door as of movement after stillness.

She stood holding the curtain back, a tall, bright-haired figure, pale of face, startled of eyes and in white negligée. As she looked at them for an instant, her husband's haggard face dropped until it touched the child's hair, and he did not lift it.

"I heard sounds—I went to Nancy's room, and she was not there. What is she doing here?"

Perhaps a soul's recesses answered, "God knows," but outwardly there was silence.

Her eyes questioned her husband's white face as she came slowly across to his side.

"I—I heard what Jimmy said—that there is something you ought to tell me. What is it?"

He suddenly raised his eyes to hers, and their speech was a knowledge of suffering and appeal which mocked mere words. A veil was torn from the soul of the man, and it was seeking in passionate desperation for the heart of the woman. The barrier of pride-

bound unreality seemed to fall before it.

"What is it?" she whispered.

"Ruin!" he said.

She drew a deep breath.

"I've played madly—lost wickedly. Oh, I cared for nothing! I knew you did not care! But it is over now. You shall not be troubled. I'm going away—I mean to-morrow I'll be—" Suddenly his eyes fell to the sleeping child, and a tremor shook him.

"Money! only money!" she breathed, then her clear, high-bred voice sank to a note of passion. "Money—and you knew I had plenty! And you never told me—you were going away! You—you thought I did not care, and I thought you did not. I have thought— O, Hal! Hal!"

The words broke from her, as she sank to her knees beside him, her arms thrown over him. Suddenly their lips met above the child.

Jimmy sat in the pantry with his old face bowed upon his hands.

A CONSOLING THOUGHT

SHE—It makes me sad to think I had to refuse you.

HE—Oh, look on the bright side. You may live to regret it.

A CHANGED WOMAN

PHILLIPS—So you knew her before she became my wife?

GILMORE—Yes, very well; and she was a brilliant conversationalist.

"So she was, so she was; but she doesn't do anything but talk now."

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER—Who made you?

BRIGHT BOY—Papa's corner in corn.

SPRYNGE

NOWE dothe ye lyttle busy bee
 Improve eche shynynge houre,
 And hustle verrie activelee
 Inne suckynge of ye flowre.

Nowe dothe ye toade beginne toe hoppe
 Innsyde ye gardenne fence,
 And Lyttle Wyllie spinnes ye toppe
 Which cost him thyrtye cents.

Ye husbandmanne goes forthe toe hoe
 And plant hys onyun settes,
 While onne ye horse thatte wyll notte goe
 Ye tinne-horne gambler bettes.

Ye merrie mayden saunters forthe,
 All onne ye vernal morne,
 Toe see what stylish togges arre worthe,
 Her person toe adorne.

Nowe dothe ye blithesome fishermanne
 Hye forthe to digge ye worme,
 And puts ye same innsyde ye canne,
 And laughs toe see himme squirme.

Ye roses soone wyll blossome redde,
 And lovers, twoe by twoe,
 Wyll wander where sweet dreames arre fedde,
 And kiss and bill and coo.

A song of love for balmy Sprynge,
 Whose beauties never fade!
 Itte is the verrie sweetest thyng
 Thatte God hath ever made!

WILLIS LEONARD CLANAHAN.



SO SHE THOUGHT

PAULINE—I married in haste.

PENELOPE—Well, that's better than not marrying at all, I suppose.

THE MANTLE OF DE MAUPASSANT

By Willard French

JUST before his last voyage, Paul Belloni Du Chaillu sat in an editorial room, chatting with the writer on the sad fate of Sir Robert Jeffries. He said: "Before poor Jeffries went blind, I was only a bad second at globe-trotting."

Poor Jeffries! Everything went wrong with him at once. Family, fortune, eyesight disappeared, almost simultaneously. I had been telling Du Chaillu that, when I lived in London, Sir Robert, poor, blind, alone, dropped and forgotten—until he reminded the world by dying—was occupying one small room, in a lodging-house, just across an alley from my apartments.

My library window looked directly into his. His shade was rarely drawn of an evening, and a taper always burned beside him. He sat in an arm-chair, his head thrown back, smoking a long-stemmed pipe; while his fingers followed the lines of a moon book, or lay idly in his lap. Yet he seemed to me the personification of internal and scintillating peace—like radium, giving without impoverishing. Often, in some sorry mood, I fled to my window to watch him, and he spoke the "Peace, be still!" to the waves that tossed me.

One evening I went over to confess. The old man received me cordially, and to my remark that to so great a traveler seclusion must be irksome, he replied:

"In all my life I never traveled so much as during the last five years. Guy de Maupassant played with the secret, and got himself well ridiculed. But I tell you it is more than a theory: it is a science."

Finding me sympathetic and a good listener, he went on.

"Let a strange dog come in here, for example, and what does he do? Stare at the furniture and pictures? By no means. He sniffs at everything in reach, then lies down, satisfied. Now, if something should ever recall this room to him, I have an idea that it would come back as a series of smells. A life-size portrait of his master is nothing to him: his master's old coat is everything. Perfumes which ravish us do not tempt him; odors which distress us often possess some charm for him. We assume too much when we credit it to his degenerate taste.

"We use our noses simply for amusement. Only when something like a house on fire is forced on our attention, through them, do they become of practical value. He makes his nose the most important sense by which he gathers the vital brain-pictures of life. A little common sense and crude alchemy, applied to his method, add reaction, open closed doors, and give the blind a moment's sight.

"In the crowded lobby of a theatre, did you never catch a passing whiff which obliterated the bright reality, and brought back to you the girl you used to love? That's the principle. You have traveled? I thought so. India, China, Africa, you know them? Good. Let me show you something through your nose."

He took a metal case from a drawer, and opened it on a table beside me. It contained a collection of small, sealed cans.

"You must shut your eyes," he said; "and keep them shut. Therein I have

the better of you; for, open or shut, my eyes never annoy me by prodding reason to reject my nasal dreams."

Laying down a half-smoked cigarette, I rested my head on the back of the chair and closed my eyes.

"I'll open this can first," he said. "It is a combination of rice-dust, cardamom, crushed betel-leaf, dried curry-buds, a drop of attar, the section of a hubble-bubble tube, and lo! in a narrow street we are pushed and jostled toward a broad bazaar. The bamboo huts are close together. The thick, shred thatches touch one another and glow, reddish-brown, in the west-slanting sun. The houses are all open in front, but at night are closed with bamboo screens. Dark, solemn sphinx-men sit on the floors, smoking hookahs. They have white turbans and loose, white shirts, over tight, white trousers. They are barefooted, but beside each one is a pair of pointed slippers. Behind them, knots of women, pretty but for their black-dyed teeth, loosely wrapped in bright colors, are chatting, laughing, and chewing betel-leaf. In the street, the crowd curses, *ad libitum*, but never is the name of any god taken in a prayer for localized damnation. Only Christians do that. Children dodge, shouting, through the crowd, all naked, shining from oil of mustard and covered with flies. Sparsely clad venders are crying the fruits and wares in bamboo baskets on their heads—always something better than they have. That fellow with over-ripe grapes, cries, 'Figs! fine, fresh figs!' The *bhisti*, with his goatskin water-bag, calls, 'Here is wine and milk!' just as his fathers cried it in the days of Isaiah, and as his cousins cry in modern newspaper advertising.

"Noisy drivers cling to donkeys' tails and beat them. There's a canopied coach, on two wheels, drawn by blue bullocks. The occupant looks the lord of all creation, sitting with folded arms, under the canopy; but he's only a native cook, on his way to the bazaar. There's a wealthy merchant, walking, in gorgeous silk, with

a huge turban. The servants, in front and behind, are yelling his name and pretending to push back the crowd. It is good advertising. Fakirs in endless rags, and fakirs in nothing but scars and dirt and daubs of yellow paint, go grunting sacred watchwords, sublimely unconscious that there is any one else upon the street. Coolies, stalwart fellows, only turbaned and girdled, jerk out a quaint song, under heavy burdens, or laugh it under lighter ones. Palanquins are everywhere, many bearing pretty girls somewhere, and the current carries us into the bewildering bazaar.

"Booths blaze with bright colors. A Yemanda swaggers past. His silk and satin costume is embroidered with silver; a huge red turban, twisted gracefully over his head, tilted to one side, is held by a band of gold; an end of red falls rakishly over his shoulder. His servant, all in white, trots behind him, with a whip for the pariahs who come too near. He is Brahman, and caste must be preserved at all hazards.

"That stately giant, in a small, orange turban, his rose-silk robe embroidered in gold, is vakeel of the great rajah. He is Mussulman. Caste does not trouble him. His eyes are fixed on the pavement, but he sees everything. Therefore is he there. A monster tusker elephant swings silently through the fantastic throng. The mahoot, on his head, is wrapped in contemplation. He is not responsible. A leader runs in front, carrying the rajah's insignia. The golden howdah is empty, but the saddle-cloth bears the crest of the rajah. The people make way without bidding, and as the crest passes them they fall upon their knees. The elephant is out as convoy for the palanquin behind him. From end to end it is carved ivory, upholstered in silver cloth, cushioned in white cashmere. The vakeel lifts a finger; the elephant stops; the palanquin rests, and he enters; his mission is completed. He is borne away toward yonder motee—pearl of mosques, whose glistening marble domes and Saracenic arches enfold

each other, till the mosque is but one beautiful, complex dome.

"The sky grows red, and through the blue mists of earth it tints the air with sunset purple. Here and there a smoking torch already flares before some booth, especially under the shadow of the colossal white-and-red sandstone gate in the high wall which forms the opposite side of the bazaar. Beyond it, all this is forgotten, in one of earth's most masterful transformations. The marble arch is continued in a grand arcade of cypress-trees, bordering a broad marble path, as it drops, gently, into a marvelous valley, a valley of fountains—magnificent marble fountains, and flowers—wonderful! Flora in all her glory! and palms—a hundred kinds, and tamarinds and pomegranates. Across the valley, on rising ground, so that it seems to float trembling on the foliage, clear-cut against the blue above and the sun's fiery farewell below, is the matchless mausoleum of the Light of the Harem, Nuhr Mehal.

"The crimson fades quickly, and along the beryl horizon is the Tyrian cloud that nightly girdles slumbering India. Against it four Mussulmans appear, in the nest of one of the minarets. The muezzin! They raise their hands to their heads, and with the splashing of the fountains and the patter of the palm-leaves sounds the first mugreet: '*La-illa-ilulla-Muhamud, Rusol-il-ulla!*' The moon, already risen, flashes triumphantly out of the ashes of the dead day, and the mausoleum is resplendent in a glory impossible under the sun. Whiter than snow, the great heart dome, the golden globe above it, the smaller domes and minarets about it, outshine the stars. Hail, champion of marble art! Incomparable Taj Mehal, I kneel to thee!

"The next can sets its genie free from dust of sandalwood, soaked in ambergris, laudanum, tea-leaves, camphor, musk; and the faces turn yellow and the cornices turn up. The turbans are little caps, or straw basins, upside down. The hookahs are brass-bowled

pipes, holding a thimbleful. Only babies and porters approximate nakedness. The rest are clothed and clothed upon in shades and grades of blue. The low-roofed houses lean upon one another—some of brick, with tile roofs, but mostly of bamboo. They are divided into little districts, fire-districts, by high, brick walls, fire-walls, supposed to say to the fires—there is no end of fires—'Thus far and no farther!' and the fire is given free range in the district where it starts. Sometimes it climbs a wall, which is considered most ungrateful. The pagodas and mansions of the rich have their own fire-walls, about beautiful gardens. But they are usually in the suburbs.

"Queues behind, slant-eyes in front, people are gliding everywhere, on thick-soled, silent shoes. The women, the younger women, are pretty—rather pretty. Such little things, and their hair always so well kept! There are two being trundled along in a wheelbarrow. Wheelbarrows, as common carriers, are as plenty as palanquins. They are side-seated, like little Irish jaunting-cars, built for two, with the cart before the horse; and the horse is a grunting coolie. Out on the roads, when the wind is right, they put up a sail.

"The houses are all shops. The shops are all bright streamers, paper, silk, anything on which words can be written. Words are written on everything. Dear knows what they all mean! A sudden cry demoralizes everything. Pig-tails, little women and wheelbarrows scatter like a bunch of quail. A yellow-buttoned mandarin, the prefect, is coming, in a gorgeous palanquin. A runner is ahead, crying out, and cutting right and left with a whip.

"Twilight comes and the highway is deserted. Highways are never lighted, and he who goes on them must carry a lantern bearing his name—a Chinese lantern, of course. What else could they be? It's a mistake to suppose that Chinese lanterns were created simply for lawn decoration.

"Here is a can with cocoanut-oil and clove, camphor, orange-rind and what-not, exhaling the brightest of sunshine and the bluest of blue-black sea. The steamer creeps cautiously through a narrow gate in a coral reef, and across a bay—a perfect circle, fringed with cocoanut-palms. Some of them bend far over the water. Their bushy tops are brilliant with that peach of the Orient, the gorgeous King Cocoanut. The dancing waves that lap their trunks are flecked, each with a flash of foam. Thousands of flying-fish dart everywhere, splashing in the white-caps, to wet their wings. Beyond the palms, the mass of flowering, fruiting shrubs is impenetrable. The fort, which guards the entrance, is engulfed. Nature could not endure anything so angular. There's not a sign of humanity till, through an almost invisible gate, we enter a smaller lagoon, alive with shipping, thick with native boats, lying high out of the water, like shingles on edge, held by long-horned outriggers, flying under dark sails or gliding under oars.

"Half hidden in green, ahead, is the port of Galle; broad, shadowy highways, swept by the spicy breezes that blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle. No one hurries, crowds or curses. From the babies up, they are the gentlest things in flesh and blood. Cocoanut-oil has turned their skin to olive plush, and their hair to crowns of glory. When it rains, they protect their hair by carrying a broad, fan-palm leaf over their heads. Their costumes are as lacking as the law allows. Mendicants are conspicuous because of their absence. So are nabobs. There is too little anxiety in life to nourish either. Waters full of fish, forests full of fruit and game, air full of sunshine, temperature without a change. Dear heaven, what would you more? Nothing ever happens here, except at sunset. Then the signal gun is fired, the vessels in the harbor drop their sails, the outriggered shingles disappear, the golden mirror of the golden setting turns a sil-

ver sheen, and the opal of the Orient goes to sleep.

"The next compound is simpler. I must light a pinch, from my can, in the candle and— Ha! ha! Coughing already! That's an old trick of bricks from the bogs of Drogheda—and then a laugh; the undertone and overtone of their Song of Life. All between is a wail of woe, but agitators are the only ones who seem to know that there is anything at all between.

"Hear her laugh—that girl on the bench by the coach-office door. She has a bundle tied in a huge, bright handkerchief. She is going somewhere—perhaps to America. Her short, fat toes coddle the pavement. All of the women are barefooted—except on Sunday. What hair! what eyes! what cheeks! Most of the women have shawls over their heads; hers has fallen off. Only the men wear hats and shoes—such hats and shoes! Her red petticoat is brand-new. Red petticoats are all the rage. The skirts are looped over them, up to the waist, falling only behind, for self-preservation—except on Sunday.

"Across the street is a crumbled mansion, with a littered inner court and disintegrating outside stairs. Up and down from it are mud cabins, roosting any old way—with little, low-down weeds permeating a neglected garden, where they have demoralized all the authorized things with Latin names. Some of the cabins have fragments of whitewash clinging to the mud, and crooked chimneys, thrust through the straw thatches. The thatches are a beautiful green—moss and ferns; for it rains nine times a day—even Sunday. There's a hole at one end for a window. There's a larger hole in the middle, for a door; holes usually open, often from constitutional inability of the door to shut.

"Inside is a pile of peat-bricks, waiting, and another, working under a pot of potatoes; and tea; a spinning-wheel and people—generations of people, all laughing or singing. At the other end, happy luck, is a pony, or, by the grace

of God, a cow; by lesser grace, sheep, goat, hens; by dire necessity and all over everywhere, a grunting graft of embryo bacon—God bless the Irish canary that pays the rent!

"Ponies and donkeys are passing, with burdens amidships and drivers perched on their haunches; men under hats their fathers wore, carrying knotty sticks—bog-oak shillalahs; boys with patches made into trousers; pigs and chickens, sheep and dogs—measly dogs; all laughing. Most of them, pigs and people, stop to say good-bye to the girl on the bench.

"A priest is coming. '*Pax vobiscum.*' The men all touch their holey hats; the women make a quick, queer bob at the knees. He stops by the girl on the bench. Through the pathos of poverty, the romance of living scintillates. A warning clatter clears the way. The coach, an overgrown, four-wheeled jaunting-car, draws up. The priest laughs his blessing, the people laugh good-byes, the girl laughs as she clambers up with her bundle, the driver laughs as he cracks his whip, and in no time every trace of poverty disappears.

"The coach is rolling through throbbing green, by a beautiful lake, dotted with islands that glory in centuries of wondrous lore. At a glance, we see Kenmare, with its lordly castle, the Herbert mansion, where Queen Victoria was entertained, the ruins of Ross and sacred Muckcross. The way is stone-walled, but the very wall is bright with moss and flowers—wild strawberries growing to the very top. Over it is a stretch of greenest green, then blue—the blue about Innisfail; then mountains, dappled, purple heather and uncontrollable forests; loftier peaks beyond them in tinted mists. Oh, Killarney! Killarney!

"Now, this is fir balsam, spruce-dust, a bit of moss-mold, a fragment of fungus, cedar and a grain of musk. How your knees quiver and shake as you drop in the underbrush! How your heart swishes in your ears! Your

hands are cold. Your finger trembles on the trigger. The click-clack of his hoofs is coming near. Thank heaven, you are to windward! You hear the thump of his antlers. Your eyes are ready to leave you, and go out to see for themselves. Suffocation seizes you. Will he never come in range? Can you wait? Will you dare? And yet you notice every chirp and buzz about you. You see the pinnacles of pine sweeping the blue. You feel each root and twig against your knees. One vital tension magnifies all life; and what on earth can equal the supreme moment, when your first bull-moose looms in view, swinging his great hulk through the wild woods of Maine!

"Now—phew! This is no odor of Eden. No! And appropriately it takes us 'way down, a thousand feet under the forests of Griqua and the waters of the Vaal. Long lines of tunnels radiate in every direction. They are filled with flickering stars—dancing tapers fixed on wires and thrust into the matted wool of naked Kaffirs, bronze, dripping, working like maniacs under white drivers. Hades would be cooler. Egypt was never so dark. Dark? The darkness is so thick that the tapers form only a little halo about themselves. The din is deafening—foremen cursing, Kaffirs grunting, sledges clanging, shovels clattering, drills buzzing, clay falling. Louder still is the twang of iron wheels on iron rails, hundreds of tilting trucks dashing down the galleries, each with a ton of 'blue,' to be shot up the main shaft, out into the rain and sunshine, to rot, for the great pulsators. Louder still—a boom that shakes the earth and a rush of wind out of one of the tunnels and into it again, extinguishing the tapers! Only a blast of dynamite; only a means to speed. The tapers are quickly relighted, and the glistening, sweltering, naked army is at work again, as though the fate of the universe hung on its efforts. Day-shifts and night-shifts keep the trucks thundering.

Brakes? They have none. The only requisite is speed! By an unfailing average, every truck load of 'blue' shot up the shaft means a carat and a half of diamond. The more dirt, the more diamond! Speed! The demoniac fever fills the air. Sweat, groan, die—anything but delay! Speed! is the watchword of the Kimberley diamond-mines.

"I must borrow a light from my candle again, for the next, and the din is drowned in a stillness as profound as the dark that stifled the tapers. It is the silence of the desert—the sublimest solitude of earth. The caravan has come to rest, for the first night hours, in a hollow among the dunes. In a chariot of fire, the sun plunges behind the belt of leaden clouds, which never rain, but hang forever on the desert horizon. Instantly, everything is gray. Even the century camels, some of them, are taken by surprise. They drop on their knees, then on their haunches and topple over, with the agonized wail forever gurgling in their twisting throats while they consign themselves to Mother Earth. The Arabs hurry through belated prayers, and before the *'Ulla do valeen'* is off their tongues, they are turning praying-mats to sleeping-rugs, and, lacking goat-hair tents, they cover their heads with effie and burnoose and follow the camels.

"Then comes the incomparable splendor of the death scene in the drama of a day, on the desert of Nubia. Silently, suddenly the air is per-

meated with deepening purple. The dingy coats of the camels are dyed. The desert-browned abas of the sleeping Arabs are robes of royal crimson. The sand-dunes are the heaving breasts of an ocean of blood; the sky a dome of garnet set with crimson stars. A camel lifts his head and opens his eternally wondering eyes—soft, seal-brown eyes in the fierce day-glare, they flash, in the after-glow, like carbuncles set in furry fire.

"Silently, swiftly, as it comes, it goes again, and white stars throb in utter black, till in the east a faint horizon line appears. The stars grow dim; a red disk is above the dunes; the moon leaps out of the desert, growing dazzling white as it throws off the sand, and the still dunes become a silver sea. Still? Still as if no ear were open; still as if the earth and all that therein is had died with the dying day; until, from far, comes a faint sound, like the distant patter of fine rain. It is sand, lying loose beneath the heels of a hurrying caravan. See it? Swiftly, silently, but for that soft zipping sound, a long line of desert ships is flying for water! Swinging, swaying, black against the glistening white, a trailing train of shimmering shadows, in the subtle land of silhouettes.

"These are my ministers, my friend, and, when gloom would engulf me, I throw about my shoulders the mantle of de Maupassant, and bid them bear me away on their bosom, o'er oceans, wild and wide."



INCONTESTABLE

INSURANCE AGENT—What are the proofs of your husband's death, madam?

THE WIDOW—Well, he has been home for the last three nights.

THE SPINSTER'S RUBAIYAT

By Katherine La Farge Norton

WAKE! For the hour of hope will soon take flight
And on your form and features leave a blight;
Since Time, who heals full many an open wound,
More oft than not is very impolite.

II

Before my relatives began to chide,
Methought the voice of conscience said inside:
"Why should you want a husband, when you have
A cat who seldom will at home abide?"

III

And, when the evening breeze comes in the door,
The lamp smokes like a chimney, only more;
And even yet the deacon of the church
Is telling every one my parrot swore.

IV

Behold, my aunt into my years inquires,
Then swiftly with my parents she conspires,
And in the family record changes dates—
In that same book which says all men are liars.

V

Come, fill the cup and let the kettle sing!
What though upon my finger gleams no ring,
Save that cheap turquoise that I bought myself?
The coming years a gladsome change may bring.

VI

Here, minion, fill the steaming cup that clears
The skin I will not have exposed to jeers,
And rub this wrinkle vigorously until
The maddening crow's-foot wholly disappears.

VII

And let me don some artificial bloom,
Then turn the lamps down low, and make a gloom
That spreads from library to hall and stair;
Thus do I look my best—but ah, for whom?

VIII

You know, my friends, with what a brave carouse
I once gave a reception in my house.

And how, though many hundreds I have spent,
I have not yet ensnared a hapless spouse.

IX

Strange, is it not? that of the women who
Before me passed the door of marriage through,

Not one will tell me of the tricks she used,
And help *me*, finally, to get there, too.



FABLE OF THE ELIXIR OF HAPPINESS

A YOUTH there was, who, finding no joy in the life he led, set out in search of Happiness. He passed through many lands and strange adventures. With his sword he won renown, with his talents he gathered great wealth. And his graces brought him a beautiful maid. But he tired of all, and was sick of heart, for Happiness was not born of his pleasures. So he cursed his fate, and, gloomy of brow, pursued his way with dogged will, but sinking hope, till at length, one dusky eve, as he rode along, he saw two thieves who beat an aged Hermit with fatal intent.

The Youth, with drawn sword, rode sharp to the rescue, and he slew the two knaves, and the graybeard gave thanks in the name of the gods. Then the Hermit took the Youth to his cave, and fed him, and asked him his will. So the Youth told the tale of his fruitless search, and bemoaned his luckless fate. Whereat the Hermit arose, and brought forth a golden jar and gave it him, and thus he spake:

"Behold the Elixir of Happiness! Herein lie the blended essences of all joys, distilled from the virtues of mankind. Eternal beatitude is in the hands of him who possesses this jar. Gratefully I give it unto thee, the fruit of the labor of my life, the which thou hast preserved. Go, and may it profit thee well."

Then the Youth took reverently the Elixir of Happiness, and, with great joy, departed therewith. To his castle he hied him swiftly, fearful lest he be robbed on the road. And he caused great bolts and bars to be placed on his gates, and there, in solitude and seclusion, he opened the precious jar, and partook of the contents thereof.

So the days passed and the weeks, and regularly the Youth took his portion. Yet Happiness came not. Austere, and in gloom, he waited in vain, and then a great rage came upon him, and he cursed his credulity. He seized his great sword, and swore a great oath, and spurred his charger to the Hermit's cave. There he called aloud, and the Hermit came forth with a smile, and bowed. Then the Youth seized his beard, and spat in his face, and, frothing with rage, cried out:

"Thou dullard! Thou dolt! Thy wit is as short as thy beard is long. With mine own hands have I kept safe thy jar. Each morn did I eat thereof. Speak, thou vile monger of lies, where is my Happiness?"

Then the Hermit rose up in his wrath, and smote the jar with his staff, so that it fell in a thousand fragments, and the Youth shrank back in alarm.

"Fool!" shrieked the Hermit, "'twas others thou shouldst have fed, not thyself!"

ERWIN HAYDEN.

A FICTITIOUS VENTURE

By Robert Adger Bowen

THE editor paced the Bokhara rug of his drawing-room-like sanctum with unusual perturbation of mind. It was not often that he had such a difficult tangle to unravel as the various reports of his readers had involved him in with regard to the manuscript that lay scattered over his desk—the only sign of businesslike untidiness in the commodious room. Indeed, the opinions were so widely divergent that they were worse than of no use to him. He paused in his movements, and took them up one by one. "Rubbish, refuse," was the alliterative gist of that from his most influential adviser. "No trace of literary merit, but psychologically of great interest," read part of another. "Possessing commercial possibilities of the highest kind—a story that the female portion of the public may be confidently expected to buy with avidity." "Unconvincing, but meretriciously alluring. Of doubtful availability." At the bottom of the lot lay a longer report: "Charming in every way. Irresistible in humor and pathos. To be strongly recommended from every point of view."

The editor sighed and frowned. He could base no judgment of his own on such reports. To refuse the thing expeditiously or to examine it himself were the confronting alternatives. He shrank from both alike. As soon as he refused it, some one else would seize upon it, and boom it to success. And he hated the imaginative froth of the fiction-monger's mind, and was, to tell the truth, not much of a judge of it. Why did people do doubtful things? he asked himself, irritably.

His glance fell involuntarily upon the report lying uppermost in the shuffle into which he had cast them in his annoyance. "A story that the female portion of the public may be confidently expected to buy with avidity." He grunted. And this recommendation came from a woman! He saw a way out of the difficulty, and, seating himself in his capacious chair, pushed the button of the electric bell. "Send me Miss Burson," he said to the office-boy; "without her notebook."

Stripped thus of her reason for being, the stenographer appeared. The great man was once again calmly judicious. He smiled, genially.

"A little diversion for you," he said, taking up the loose pages of the manuscript. "I want you to read this story and tell me whether you like it or not. That is all."

The young woman withdrew, her heart fluttering with sudden glimpses of vistas that led away from typewriters and the pothooks of business correspondence. How had the editor come to have faith in her literary and critical judgment? She had always had it herself. Did she not always appreciate the most popular novels! She now went back to her desk, holding her head a little more gracefully than usual. She smiled condescendingly at the girl who sat near her, and who looked up in the pauses of the staccato dictation of a sales-agent. Then she began ostentatiously to read the story.

The verdict that she rendered a few hours later quite decided the editor.

"It is cute, cunning, too dear for anything. I think, perhaps——"

The editor raised his hand, deprecatingly.

"That is all," he said, smiling with happy assurance. "I am glad you like it."

"It's lovely! Are you going to publish it?"

He glanced at her, sharply, frowned, then smiled again.

"Yes. You will not speak about it, Miss Burson. Thank you for your valuable assistance."

Many of the press comments on the published book agreed with the disparaging reports of the readers, but the public seemed to be inclined to agree with Miss Burson. The book sold, sold well, became one of the "books in demand," and the press notices also that had not already been written now agreed with Miss Burson.

That young lady felt herself in fine fettle. Being of a naturally observant frame of mind, and living in a small town in New Jersey, she began to watch for the commuters who might be reading this book which she could not but feel she had helped into life, and it was not long before she was able to pick out at a glance, not at the book being read, but at the style of person reading it, who was engrossed with "The Little Bubble that Burst." She soon learned to pay no attention to the male contingent of her fellow-passengers on ferryboat or train. It seemed that the bursting of this particular bubble had no interest for men; but all those of her own sex, with the exception of the professionally shop-worn kind returning home with many bundles, seemed to be given over to the spell of the book. During the sail on the river from the Pennsylvania station to the Twenty-third street ferry, and the other way at night, Miss Burson would pass the time in walking up and down before the long line of passengers, and scanning the backs of the books they were reading. She seemed to be unconscious of the interest she aroused in the minds of those who were reading nothing.

And still "The Little Bubble that Burst" kept afloat in that atmosphere

in which much better books and newer had already burst and been forgotten. It kept afloat so well, indeed, that the firm which had brought it forth congratulated itself on the keenness of its foresight, and reaped a snug harvest.

II

THE ferryboat was pulling out of the slip. Miss Burson had just begun her customary rounds, when the sight of a young man reading the familiar little red book caused her to sit down abruptly in the vacant seat next to him. To make assurance doubly sure, she leaned slightly toward him and looked at the pages. There was no mistake.

Suddenly, the young man closed the book viciously.

"Damnable rot!" he muttered.

Miss Burson recoiled with a little exclamation. It was as though he had slapped and anathematized her.

"Pardon me," he said, raising his hat politely. "I was referring to this incredible book." He held it toward her.

"I have read it," she retorted, somewhat sharply. "Indeed, before it was a book."

The young man glanced at her closely, at her trim suit, and then at the authoress's name on the book.

"I didn't write it," she snapped, reading his thought.

He bowed again, and moved away, leaving Miss Burson to her reflections.

Why should she, too, not write a book! The thought sent the blood pulsing to her heart. Why had it never occurred to her to do this before! In the exhilaration of the idea, she felt the atmosphere of the cabin stifling, and, getting up, went out on deck. The icy breeze blowing in straight from the Atlantic seemed to be sweeping from her all the prosaic drudgery of the past years, and filling her instead with a new and intoxicating resolve. Before she went to sleep that night, she had developed her plot, and begun to live in that curious world of unreal

reality known as the imagination. For three months she lived in it, with a fixity of purpose upheld by the continued success of "The Little Bubble that Burst," and by her own faith, stimulated by the interest she took in the magazine and newspaper gossip about popular authors.

It was not until all was finished, and she had, under the pseudonym of Grace Darling, sent the story to the publishing house that employed her in another capacity, that she found her assurance tinged with the anxiety of uncertainty.

One day, the editor sent for her to come to his sanctum.

"I want you to help me again," he remarked. "Here is a manuscript upon which I have had two conflicting reports. I should like your views."

Miss Burson's hands trembled. She recognized her own story. The editor looked for a second at the title-page before he handed the manuscript over. He had heard of Grace Darling, but at the moment could not remember whether she was a popular actress or a trotting horse.

"Evidently a pen name," he said, handing it to the excited girl; "see what you think of it."

The next day, she returned it with a type-written slip stating that it had interested her greatly, and that she hoped it might be published. She recalled the deprecating gesture on the first occasion, and ventured no expression of criticism. Ten days later, Grace Darling had signed the contract for the publication of her story, "The Way of Success," and safely resisted the attempt of the publishers to get her to their office for a personal interview.

III

THERE had for some years been a suitor for Miss Burson's hand and heart in the person of a young railroad official in her native town. If she had not encouraged him, she had at least not discouraged him. This had not been due so much to instinctive co-

quetry as to the fact that he was pleasing in appearance and manner, and, of a certainty, very devoted. He had always been held in retention, as it were, for possible contingencies. Now, however, Miss Burson decided suddenly, being called on once again for her decision.

"Believe me, Richard," she said, in the best manner of her own Gwendolyn, in "The Way of Success," "it is a genuine grief to me to cause you a moment's suffering, but what you ask cannot be."

"You have always given me hope before," he replied, with sincere distress.

"Do not reproach me. Perhaps I was wrong. The truth is," and here she hesitated with piquant modesty a moment, "my horizon has broadened lately. New duties have come to me, duties that preclude me from the equally high duties of wifehood, and—motherhood."

"I thought none was so high," Richard hazarded, after due meditation, not understanding the absent smile with which Miss Burson was committing the whole scene to memory.

"Art is as high as life," she murmured.

"Oh, if you are thinking of the stage!" he retorted, rising. Miss Burson, too, had risen, and held out her hand.

"I am not," she said. "We won't discuss it now, however."

On the whole, she had felt greatly relieved at this dignified termination of a suit which was no longer a desideratum.

She perhaps felt the less regret at this step inasmuch as her mind was fully occupied with the already swiftly changing conditions of her existence. It was at this moment that she resigned her position as stenographer, and, before the receipt of her final proof, engaged a room in a large family hotel on the lower West Side. Her life now proved almost ideal. In some way, scarcely explicable even by herself, it came to be bruited about

the corridors and drawing-rooms of the hotel that the packages arriving at the desk, marked for Grace Darling, contained proofs of a forthcoming novel. In a yet more subtle way, it was implied, and likewise denied over the afternoon teas of the other guests, that much of the success of that remarkable "flier," "The Little Bubble that Burst," was due to the critical insight and rare judgment of Miss Burson herself, who was even then, so further report said, engaged in still more literary work. As a result of all this, Miss Burson received an invitation from Mrs. Whippingham Jones, whose serial was running in *The Arbiter*, to drink tea in the parlors of the hotel "and meet a few friends." This invitation, which Miss Burson was not at all aware was accorded her because of professional distaste, was accepted with a complaisance that went far to prick the sides of Mrs. Whippingham Jones's intent.

"She knows nobody," that lady said to her intimate friend, Miss Wilkes, whose only book had sold less than a thousand copies, "and I shall have every author of repute in New York, and take pains to introduce her, without endorsement. Her airs are insufferable."

"How sweet of you!" Miss Wilkes murmured, with a sincerity of feeling as great as the falsity of her statement.

The event, however, did not justify Mrs. Whippingham Jones's expectations. She had not rightly estimated the self-advertising instinct just then keyed to its greatest alertness in Miss Burson.

"The audacious creature used her ignorance of every one for her own advantage," declared her enraged hostess afterward. "She had not read the greatest successes of the day because of her absorption in the writing of her own forthcoming book!" And Mrs. Whippingham Jones hardened.

"Never mind," soothed Miss Wilkes, "pride goeth before destruction."

"And a haughty spirit before a fall," responded Mrs. Whippingham

Jones, absently, shaking her suspiciously blond head.

IV

Nor long after this, the advance notices of the book began to appear, and now Miss Burson first realized the unsatisfactory nature of a *nom de plume*. Not only did she feel cheated of the glory rightly due her from the public, but she found herself grafting on to Grace Darling her own peculiar prerogatives of birth and experience. A letter from the publishers had come asking for her photograph, and a statement of her life. The photograph she had been compelled to refuse, she wrote, "on principle;" the facts of her life she gave with the sense of paying the debts of some one else.

Then came the happy days of waiting. It would be several weeks before the book would be out, and several months before she might expect to receive any pecuniary reward. She counted her savings, divided them by the week, and felt her heart sink at the balance left over. Moments of depression were few, however. Not even the return of a short story, intended as a "pot boiler," and sent to a prominent magazine, dashed her buoyant hope for more than a passing instant. Once she were known, the editors would be begging for her work, and that time drew near! At last the book appeared.

She never forgot the sensation that almost overcame her as her eye fell upon the first notice of her book in the daily press, a notice several inches in length. Dropping into a chair in the spacious lobby, she began to read it hungrily.

That a house of such well-established repute as is that of the publishers of this remarkable book should now and then be led after the will-o'-the-wisp of a new and possibly popular author is not to be wondered at in these days of "high-fliers" in literature, but that any house should be deluded into the publishing of such preposterous rubbish as that going to make up the contents of this volume is indeed a cause for public indignation and protest.

The groan that burst from Miss Burson's lips made the tall lady with iron-gray hair and large seal rings, who happened to be sitting near, look at her sharply. She collected herself enough to read on with eyes that grew dry in their sockets.

It is inconceivable what purpose the publishers had in view. It is equally inconceivable that they should have been advised to publish this book. Is it that here they thought could be made an example of the too-ready writer of the age? For let it be said, for those curious to see a phenomenon, that "The Way of Success" is worth damning. So much, indeed, cannot be held of all books.

This was not all, but the rest Miss Burson could not make out. She had a queer sensation of trying to see with her eyes, but she could not see. The next thing she really knew was that the lady with the iron-gray hair and seal rings was fanning her with the fatal paper, while several bell-boys stood around with glasses of water.

V

"THE Way of Success" was a failure; there could be no doubt of that. Not all the press notices, indeed, had been so merciless as the first one, but publishers and public alike let the book fall. This humiliation, however, was as nothing compared with the bitterness of the covert silence or intolerable sympathy of those about her to whom Miss Burson had vain-gloriously boasted. Life had suddenly become a keen torture. She would have fled ignominiously before the storm had not her room been secured for some time in advance.

Had Miss Burson been inclined to doubt the failure of her venture, which she never had been from that awful first hour of her baptism of fire, Mrs. Whippingham Jones was determined that she should not. They met one evening in the elevator, Mrs. Whippingham Jones gorgeous in a gown of crimson beneath her yellow hair.

"I have been reading your book.

What was it that suggested the title, Miss Burson?"

The other occupants of the car turned to look at the woman addressed.

"The floating of a bubble," she replied, meeting Mrs. Whippingham Jones's hard eyes.

That lady drew down the corners of her mouth intellectually, and stiffened.

"The title is good," she said, lingering over the words. "I infer, of course, that you named the story before it was written."

"Is that the way you build up your efforts?"

An elderly lady, with a pair of sharp gray eyes, got up from the cushioned seat, suddenly, and cleared a space in front of her. Mrs. Whippingham Jones added several cubits to her stature.

"The titles for my novels are always organic," she declared, with freezing hauteur. "It is so difficult otherwise to avoid inappropriate names."

Miss Burson bowed to hide the tears that came to her eyes. As the elevator stopped at the main floor, the old lady put out a hand and touched her. She had always liked the girl.

"Never mind her, child. Get out of this as quickly as you can. There is no jealousy meaner than literary jealousy."

"But I am not jealous," Miss Burson said, pitifully, feeling that she had been bruised black and blue. "And I'm sure she need not be of me."

"Of course you are not." The old lady was leading the way into the dining-room. "But there is a triumphant jealousy as well as a fearing one. It takes what they call an artist of some sort to give it expression. You are going to dine with me."

"You are very good," murmured her companion.

"Not particularly. You see I once studied for the stage, and, when they hissed me the first night, I fainted. I know something of your feelings."

"But you kept on?"

"No, I didn't. I went back. It is very often the best thing to do."

Miss Burson watched her order an

expensive dinner, and was inclined to agree.

"You are going back," affirmed the old lady over her oysters.

"I don't understand. Back where?"

"It doesn't matter *where*, but back of the microbes that started you to write a novel."

Miss Burson colored vividly, and her entertainer laughed. After a time, the latter said:

"You are far too pretty ever to be an authoress! Only women plain enough to be willing to stay at home six nights out of the seven ever succeed there. Did you ever hear of a beautiful authoress?"

"There was Sappho," Miss Burson suggested.

"Sappho! Drink your wine, child. Sappho had a nice little voice, and sang a few suggestions. I'm thinking of the women who turn out a novel of six hundred pages a year, heavy with moral problems and all uncharitableness. You hadn't got so far, but it would have come. We sing Brunhilds in these days, not Cherubinos."

But Miss Burson was not listening. She had turned very pale, and, follow-

ing the direction of her gaze, her hostess saw a young man and woman seated at a near table. They were patently bride and bridegroom. Suddenly the man's eye met Miss Burson's, and he flushed crimson. Then he bowed, awkwardly.

"I see," said the old lady, after a few moments' close scrutiny of the table. "You might have been in that gray dress. He has shown poor taste, my dear. What made him do it?"

Miss Burson's hands trembled as she put down her napkin, and her eyes fell before the sharp ones looking at her.

"It was the book," she replied, slowly, almost to herself. "But he might have waited to see whether I really meant it."

The old lady laughed. Then she said, sententiously: "I see that you have gone back. That is good. We sha'n't have any more books now, but you will make me a useful companion."

Miss Burson met her interrogative look. She did not reply in words, but as they rose from the table, she gathered up the elder woman's gloves and purse, and followed her down the long corridor.



CERTAINLY AN INDUCEMENT

WIFE—I will never, never speak to you again!

HUSBAND—What are you trying to do—make up?



MR. GREENEYE—Is it necessary to let that fellow kiss you during those amateur theatricals?

MRS. GREENEYE—You'd think so if you saw his wife!



SHE (*saucily*)—Now, sir! You mustn't crush these violets.

HE—Hadh'n't you better take them off?

IN THE HALL WITH GWYNETH

By Zona Gale

DRAW the thread through the moving loom,
Lift the silk where the sun will fall;
Weave and weave and weave, till all
The green woof passes into bloom;

Weave till the flowery pattern dies,
And petals fade in the falling dusk;
Out of the garden blow attar and musk;
Over the garden one cloud lies.

Leave the loom, O daughter of her
Who bore three fairies, and then bore thee
To drink up the souls of the other three,
And learn what strange things were;

Leave the loom, and sit here instead,
Long fair hand on the carven arm,
Face like a lily risen warm
From the blood of roses dead.

Little shadows come in to blur
The pageant of pearls on thy robe's blue hem,
And the white of the pearl leaps out from them
Like moons of dusks that were.

The drone of the loom was like the drone
Of old warm noons in the lonely Fall,
When fields are deep with broom, and all
The air with amber bees is sown.

O Silver Woman, what shall I say?
Is it indeed that I love thee?—
Or only the beauty that sings to me
When I cross thy way?

Is it thou, Sweet, or the dream of thee?
Is it thou whom I love, or the old, warm noons
And the sealed light of sunken moons
That thy strange face weaves for me?

I have loved women in many lands,
Languid women and women at looms;
I have seen Love laid in the thousand tombs
Love understands.

And here is the whole brave truth at last:
 There is something dearer than these, to me!
 Aye, the beauty that love gives radiantly
 Is the prize that I hold fast.

Leave me, thou lily of gardens dim
 That I do not know, thou very sweet
 Of the world of dreams! O Little Feet,
 Go over the utmost twilight rim

Of the world, and bear thou there with thee
 Thy silver hands and thine odorous hair—
 But the dream and wonder thou canst not bear,
 For the high gods gave them me!

Now Gwyneth who wove hath left her loom,
 With silken step for the turret stair,
 And the dark is everywhere in the room,
 And the casement suffers the listless air.

The casement suffers the listless air—
 There was one who leaned there long ago—
 And, oh, for the scarf that she used to wear,
 And a name that I used to know!



THE ONLY ONE LEFT

THE last child looked about him painfully, and winced, without knowing why, at the contemptuous glances of the grown-ups. His mother, shame-faced and absorbed, fed him furtively from a bottle, and blushed as she did so. "Mother," said the child, curiously, "what is the matter? Are we different from the rest? What have we done to cause all this prying contempt?"

His mother sighed as she replied:

"My boy, it is no longer good form to have children. The idea of not having them, promulgated at first by a few queens of society, gradually spread to the masses, until it became firmly established. Now no self-respecting wife ever has any babies. You are the only one left. You are the last child."

"But, mother, whom am I to play with?"

"Playing went out long ago, with the advent of psychology and the higher education. It was discovered that children got a certain amount of pleasure out of playing, and this not being in accordance with the scheme of life as taught in the highest thought circles, it was stricken off the list."

"But, mother, is there no hope for me?"

"None whatever. By being born you have fatally compromised yourself and me. You are a freak, and I am ostracized. There is no help for us."

And the last child, overwhelmed by the seriousness of the situation, conscious of the humiliation of his position, turned sorrowfully to his mother, and said:

"Oh, mother, will you forgive me? I knew not what I did."

And the mother folded him in her arms.

"My dear child," she sobbed, "don't you see that I am to blame? In the race for supremacy I have been left behind. I am a relic of the past. Alas! to think that I should turn out to be only a mere mother!"

AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN

By Margaret Temple

JOHN LEONARD stood looking at his wife, hot rebellion in his heart, incompetent anger running riot there and maddening him with its futile onslaught against the things which must be endured.

"Must" is a word that admits of few evasions, and man is seldom prepared to face it. He fights the inevitable with all the primitive instinct in him, feeling, intuitively, for a weak spot in the enemy's defense. But for Leonard there was no weak spot. One great, unassailable fact stared him in the face.

The woman was his wife! They were bound fast in a hideous union; each struggling, fighting, protesting against the foreign element in the other. They had sprung from the same environment—known the same hopes, joys and fears; but the man had that within him which forced him upward, even as the woman lay slothfully in the state to which nature had called her.

She had all the instincts of the middle class, and, perhaps, all the virtues, though Leonard no longer recognized them. Time had wrought changes, many and lasting, but this woman was as passively commonplace as on the day when he had taken her to himself. Phlegmatic, inactive and shiftless, as only a good, naturally lazy woman ever is, she had remained, perforce, as the great sculptor had hewn her out. The work had been roughly done—for even nature does not always father masterpieces—and rough it had remained.

Martha Leonard had been rather a pretty girl, and time had not robbed her of her comeliness. She was strong-

ly and straightly proportioned, with something of the Swedish cast of features; built for service, even as the Norman horse—whose shaggy feet and huge withers promise endurance—is built for it. There was no mistaking her parentage or occupation. To Leonard, positive ugliness would have been preferable to her vulgarly pretty face. He almost shuddered, when he thought of ever having seen anything attractive in it. He reminded himself that there was sometimes dignity in plainness, but that nothing could redeem the pretentious prettiness of a coarse woman. It was so flagrantly exhibited, so grotesquely adorned, so clumsily handled.

Leonard's life had been a good deal of a struggle, from the time when he had clung tenaciously to the skirts of the frail woman who mothered him until he had reached man's estate. His mother had worked out by the day—while her strength lasted—and his first memory was of being dragged from one house to another, thrust here, there and everywhere, to make room for his betters. He had had neither comfort, care, nor much food in those days; but he bore his lot with stoical indifference and cheerful equanimity. In fact, he was rather happy, and mourned only slightly when they told him his mother had "gone away." From that time on, he came in contact with the world—and its charity; and, because he had in him the stuff of which soldiers are made, he fought for his place on the great treadmill of life—and held it. At twenty-one, he enlisted in the United States Army—so fulfilling his vocation.

It was at this time that he married Martha Long, a sutler's daughter, and it was after this marriage that Leonard began to know himself. It was both a bitter and a beautiful awakening. Bitter, in the sense that, as he grew in self-knowledge, he also looked with soul-widening, analyzing eyes at the woman he had made his wife, and saw with horror the gulf that lay between them. Beautiful, in the sense that he had, as it were, come into his kingdom. In his miserable, starved life there had been no time for learning, and now that he could lay his reverent hands upon books, he well-nigh went mad with joy at what lay between their covers.

In that wonderful world, which holds life for every man, or woman, who can spell out words, Leonard came to live. He set to work to educate himself, with a grim determination that promised success. His mind and heart blossomed under the refining influence, as a wild flower that has been choked with foul weeds bursts into undreamed of beauty at the first breath of fresh air, at the first hint of a straggling sunbeam.

The man was innately a gentleman, and the polishing and beautifying of his outer nature was not so difficult a task.

He had been married three years when he offered the woman he had made his wife half his meager pay to live away from him. He was panting like a caged thing for freedom; and perhaps the woman, in her dull way, knew the same longing.

She could not understand Leonard, and she hated his superiority, and protested against the restrictions he placed upon her. Marriage had proved a failure, in every way, and she longed for her old topsy-turvy life, where she had nothing to do but stand behind a counter and issue sundries to admiring soldiers. Her father was somewhere in northern Oregon, and she was glad to go home. She went, neither feeling, nor leaving, a regret.

For six years, Leonard lived up to his part of the bargain religiously; and

then there came a time when the money he placed in the bank for her was untouched. He made inquiries, and learned that both the woman and her father had disappeared. Subsequently, he received unreliable information of her death in Alaska. Further search proved fruitless, and so Leonard accepted the inevitable, and, as time passed, came to consider himself a free man.

Released from the cloying shackles of an uncongenial marriage, he worked to some purpose. He studied for a commission and won it, and, at thirty, was an officer in the United States Army—and the making or marring of his life lay in his own hands.

Few men, even of gentle birth, pass through the ranks of the army without being smirched with a taint of the barracks. Leonard, with his quick perception, recognized this intuitively, and he set to work to make a gentleman of himself. He spared no labor, but rigidly forged toward his goal.

At the end of the Spanish-American War he had won his captaincy, and the respect and admiration of every officer in his regiment. He had come face to face with happiness at last, and some of the goods the world can bestow. His past was a book, which he had laboriously closed. And no one cared to open it.

He had three good years behind him before Martha Leonard came into his life again. He was stationed just outside St. Louis when the summons came, and he went to her at once. He was with her now, penned up with his fate, in a dingy hotel room—face to face with the undoing of his life's work.

He had seen the hopelessness of prostration at once. She had a straightforward story to tell. She had lived honestly. She was his wife! Legally, morally, indissolubly, his wife! When she had returned with her father from Alaska, she had seen his name in the paper, learned that he was an officer in the army, and had come to claim her rights. She wanted to be a captain's wife! She wanted to be a lady! She wanted fine clothes and easy living.

She was tired of struggling. It was all so simple to her, but to him—

Seen through his world-widened eyes, she was more of a horror than ever—a vulgar, commonplace woman, little better than a servant.

He had reasoned until he was sick of his own voice; and now they stood looking into each other's eyes, defiantly. Husband and wife—each knowing their meed of hate.

At last he said again, doggedly:

"You must think out some other plan. What you ask is impossible."

"But I am your wife."

"I know—but it is impossible."

"Why impossible?"

"Because I shall not receive you."

"But you will have to."

"I think not."

"I tell you, you *will*!" Her voice rang out, shrilly. "Do you suppose I am a fool?"

"Hush!"

"Oh, I won't hush! Don't try your fine captain airs on me! Do you suppose I have forgotten you as you was when I married you—just a common trooper, no better, no worse. Take me out there and give me my rights. I guess I can act the lady with any of them. Give me a chance, I say!"

"I will not!"

He was ashy pale.

"But you shall!" She shrieked out the words, furiously, all the shrew in her coming to the front. "Don't think I am any man's easy game! I tell you, John Leonard, I know a bit about the army myself! I was raised and brought up at the doors—if it was the back doors. The colonel can make you give me my rights—or disgrace you! Take your choice! Ah! you're afraid of that, are you?—afraid of losing what you won't give me! I know you, if nobody else does. You are ashamed of me—that's what you are; though I'm no worse than when you married me, and you're no better."

"For heaven's sake, wait—and let me think."

"Oh, I'm tired of your thinking! That fine brain of yours won't help

you out this time. I want a plain answer, yes or no! or—shall I go to the colonel?"—insinuatingly.

"Listen to me, Martha." The man looked her in the eyes, commandingly. "Try to understand," he urged, slowly and impressively. "Be sensible. If I take you with me and acknowledge you as my wife, those people will not receive you. We will be cut adrift, living like strangers in a strange land, shunned, shamed, humiliated—I have worked like a slave"—he sighed, bitterly—"to fit myself for my position. It has taken years of labor to make me even what I am now; but you—you care nothing for such things! You would not even try to educate yourself."

"I reckon I have enough education to outwit you," she retorted, sharply.

"I have no doubt," bitterly, "but I can only appeal to your common sense. Tell me, do you want to live among people who will laugh at you to your face, and jeer at you behind your back?"

"I guess I can live with them as well as you can."

Leonard looked hopelessly at the stubborn face with its florid prettiness, at the tousled hair and impossible clothing, and—shuddered.

There was silence, a long, bitter silence, in which the tragedy was fought out between them. Then the man said, quietly:

"Give me three days to bring you my answer."

The woman considered a moment, then, glancing at his drawn, harassed face, acquiesced.

"Just three days," she reminded him, threateningly. "If I do not hear then, I go to the colonel."

"You will hear—do not be afraid," he answered, quietly. Then, without another look at her, he took his hat and walked to the door.

"Wait!"

He paused.

"What is it?"

"I have no money," she said, sullenly.

Without a word, he took out his

pocketbook, and, selecting a bill, laid it on the table.

"Oh, you're afraid of touching me, are you? I remember the time when——"

His eyes silenced her, and she broke off, petulantly. "That's all a woman ever gets for a life's devotion——"

"I beg you to remember," interrupted Leonard, coldly, "that you left me willingly, and lived apart from me for nine years. Half of that time you were as one dead, for all the news I had of you. Remember that, when you make your charges, please."

"Oh, I'll remember fast enough, when the time comes," she retorted, fiercely. "A wife generally has a pretty good memory. I haven't forgotten anything, and—I won't!"

Her face was almost ugly as she screamed the words after him, for Leonard had quietly left the room and closed the door behind him.

When he got into the streets, he found that it was already night-time. Thousands of lights were twinkling in the city—riotous lights, shooting from electric bulbs, sending out their intimation of gaiety and revelry within; softly-shaded lights, whispering of home and peace; dim lights, wistfully telling their tales of sorrow, suffering and sin, privation and crying want.

Leonard passed them all, walking heavily along without any fixed object. Mechanically, he turned toward Broadway and boarded a "through" car. The conductor had to touch him on the shoulder when they reached the garrison. "This is the end of the line," the man grumbled, looking at him curiously.

Leonard stepped down upon the little platform, and walked out into the cool night air. It was but a few hundred yards to his quarters, and he went straight there and changed his civilian clothes. A slight emotion showed itself in his face, as he buttoned on the familiar blue uniform.

It was half-past nine when he walked slowly down the line, and paused a moment outside a set of

quarters, where the light streaming from the windows fell in a broad band upon the road. The long, low windows were open, and a fitful Summer breeze played with the lace curtains.

Leonard stood quietly, watching the picture within. A girl in a white gown was seated at the piano, singing. Her voice, young and fresh, floated out on the evening air. The words of the old song sank into the man's heart, and remained there.

"How strangely are the ways of life adjusted;
That where the roses bloom, sharp thorns
abound;

That where the heart has dearly, fondly,
trusted,

The hour of parting surely will come 'round.
In thy fond glances, once I read a meaning—
Oh! gentle heart, I trust my fate to thee:
God bless thee, love! It was but idle
dreaming;

God bless thee, love! It was not thus to be!"

The man went slowly up the steps, through the vine-shaded porch, and rang the bell. The piano stopped, and the girl, taking her hands from the piano, turned quickly around. The hall door was open and she saw Leonard.

"I thought that was your ring," she called, gaily. "Come in."

The light from a huge lamp touched her figure as she came slowly forward, her white gown trailing lovingly around her. She was so dainty, so tender, so alluring! The kind of woman a man would commit any madness for—fashioned for love and for motherhood.

He laid his cap down in the hall, and went to meet her.

"I heard you singing outside," he said, taking the slender, cool hand in his. "I could have stood there listening forever."

She laughed.

"I can imagine you listening to anything for that length of time," she retorted, derisively. "But— Why, how ill you look!" Her eyes searched his face, quickly. "What is it? Tell me!"

"Come out on the porch," he said, abruptly, refusing to answer her. "It is stifling here."

She looked at him in silence for a

moment—at the haggard face and weary eyes; then, in silence, led the way out to the darkened veranda.

Little patches of light fell through the screen of vines upon the floor, and great wicker chairs yawned a welcoming invitation. It was all so peaceful, so full of beauty and refinement—and he was an alien, a mere upstart, whose pretensions to the niceties of life were ridiculous! He could imagine the disgust of the woman before him when she knew. He was afraid of her knowing—afraid to see the friendly light in her eyes fade; to lose that familiar, intimate tone in her voice reserved for him alone; to feel the shrinking in her whole form; the drawing away from him; the painful awakening to the knowledge that he was not of her kind. It required courage to face all this, and Leonard, sick at heart, was almost afraid of playing the coward. It was so much easier to go out of her life leaving an unsullied memory, than to lay the bare, unvarnished facts before her shrinking eyes.

The band was playing on the parade-ground, and the lights from the bandstand gleamed in small, sharp points, outlining it like a tiny castle against the sky.

Leonard turned his eyes to the girl. She was lying comfortably in the great chair, her round girlish arms falling indolently along its sides.

He made an impatient movement, and she turned her smiling eyes to his.

"Listen!" she said, softly, "do you remember that? It is the first waltz we ever danced."

"Don't," he interrupted, sharply. Then, as she turned surprised eyes to him, "I didn't mean to stop you," he stammered. "I can't explain, but—don't remind me of those things to-night."

"I knew you were ill," she said, contritely. "Tell me, won't you? Let me do something."

"There is nothing to do. Don't give me any sympathy. Wait—wait—"

She was silent, but all the pliant indolence had gone from her. She was alive, anxious, frightened, and then—

Slowly, pitifully, through the throbbing of the music, through the soft night air, into the heart of the woman he loved, the man poured his story. All, all, all! He forbore nothing, made no extenuation; only laid down the cold, bare facts, she listening, dumbly.

At last, he ceased speaking, and looked half-fearfully into her face. It was turned away from him. She was deathly pale, and only a little fluttering pulsation in her throat showed that she was breathing—and suffering.

Frightened at her stillness, he leaned forward and touched her hand.

"Muriel," he whispered.

But she did not give any intimation that she heard him.

"Speak to me—please!"

But she could not. She only clinched her small, ringless hands together and turned away.

Ah! he was suffering now. All the past emotion had been but a preparation. He was mad to defend himself, to put the unlovely truth in a lovely light, to help her—to help himself. All the fighting instinct in him was surging to the front.

"I know," he urged, bitterly, "that there is little I can say to aid either myself or you; but there is one thing—let me say it, please—one thing I want you to understand—that I would never have deceived you, even in the smallest way—it would have been impossible. I came from the ranks. You knew it. I presumed that you took my birth for granted. Indeed I am not ashamed of it. What I am you know—I hope, no matter what my birth, that I am a gentleman. I have tried to be one. This is a democratic country. I hold my position by right of my labor, and I am proud to have won it so."

He turned more to her, his face softening.

"I did not count—on—what—has come to pass," he said, slowly. "I tried to put love out of my life, and indeed I was so sure of myself that it was not until—quite lately that—that—ah, Muriel, let me say it! I am the same man whom, a few moments since, you called your friend. I could not

help loving you—what man could? You who know the power you wield so well, who have seen so many stronger men than I fall down before it, you will not judge me, for you knew long ago—before I did, perhaps—but I, manlike, blundered blindly along—until the knowledge came upon me like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. The time had passed for me to resist—I was utterly helpless."

He was silent for a moment, looking mournfully at her delicate profile cut out against the dark background.

"I had every reason to suppose that my wife was dead," he went on, arousing himself. "I had made repeated inquiries, which came to naught. There was nothing more to be learned, so I closed the incident. My past was my own—I still maintain it. But I knew that, sooner or later, I must tell you. I was waiting, hoping, when—this came!" He flung out his hands. "My life is cut short here," he finished, hopelessly. "There is no more to be said!"

She moved at last, and turned her white face to him.

"What are you going to do?" she asked, despairingly.

He started, and put out his hand as if to ward off the question, and then answered, stoically:

"I must go away!"

"What do you mean?"

"I will resign from the army."

"Oh, no! oh, no, no, no!"

"There is no other course open!"

She wrung her hands together in agony.

"Why—why not bring her here?"

"Death would be easier," he replied, quietly. And she knew that he meant it.

"Could—you—not obtain—a divorce?"

He smiled, bitterly.

"There is no ground."

She turned her head from side to side with childish helplessness.

"And there is nothing to be done?" she moaned.

"Nothing."

Her face was tragic; an overwhelming knowledge forced itself upon the

man. He crept nearer to her, and laid his hand on hers, reverently. What a small hand it was! a mere fluttering butterfly in his. He dragged it nearer to him, and tried to speak. He was a strong man and a good one, but curses rose to his heart in that moment, though his lips were turned to her and could speak only of love.

"Muriel," he whispered, softly, "my dear, dear one! I want to show you my soul, my heart, my every impulse. I go out of your life to-night, but I want you to know—to feel—in after times, that there was nothing withheld—that my love for you absorbed my whole life, and beautified it! You little knew how I seized every chance word that fell from your lips and treasured it. If you spoke of a picture, a book, a flower, it was a religion to me to know, and love it, too. All your tender ideals I absorbed, and strove to graft on to my own coarser nature. My prayer was to be a man that you could admire—I had no other thought—and, as a mason builds a mighty structure, so I built up my character from the thoughts in your heart—that tender heart."

The tears had come to his eyes, though he would not let them fall; but he bowed his head to the hand he held in his, and the woman looked silently down on him.

She loved him! God had not been kind in bringing so much misery—with so much love. She wondered, wearily, why she had been selected to suffer. She had not even learned how—life had been all playtime to her. She was one of those women from whom no one expects strength, yet who are stronger than the strongest, when tested. Tears of self-pity dimmed her eyes, but she would not murmur. She thought of him; she longed to comfort him—to put out her hand softly, and lay it on his dark hair. But she was ashamed of the caress; she had not learned to show her heart to any man.

The man raised himself, and his face was blurred and distorted, and not good to look upon.

"I must go," he said, rising unsteadily to his feet.

"Where will you go?"

She asked the question in a chill whisper.

"Where? Oh, out West—to California, Alaska, the Klondike—anywhere!"

"But how will you live?"

"I can earn a living."

He stood straight and tall before her—a man, wherever he went, and a strong one. His graceful head was held well up as he faced her.

"I must go," he repeated again. "It is the end—dear! I can't stay—and have you—remember me decently."

She was trembling now, and rebelling in her heart against the decree.

He locked her hands in his two strong ones, and looked in her eyes.

"I love you!" he said, in his pain. "Forgive me for it—I love you. Oh, I wonder if you know what love is, you frail, sweet woman! Look at me a moment. I am going—There, there— Oh, child! forgive me!"

He dropped her hands and walked blindly toward the steps.

She thought she screamed aloud; but, in reality, she made no sound—only held out her helpless arms. And he, obeying that voiceless call, turned—her face was transfigured with the eternal sacrifice of womanhood and a love that it was desecration to look upon. The man uttered a smothered groan; and she crept toward him, stumbling over her long, trailing gown.

"I can't help it," she cried, despairingly. "I can't—let—you go—Take me! take me!"

And the man, reaching then the extremity of pain, and shame, and bitterness, took the pitiful white form in his arms.

It was near dawn. The girl had got together the few small treasures she would not forsake, and was lying dressed upon her pretty, white bed, looking into the future. She knew what she faced. Delicate as a flower, and as frail, she was yet strong enough

to uproot her life and plant it again in alien soil—to stumble along into a strange country, with only love for a beacon. She did not grudge her gift, though it was too rich to put a value upon. The thought of her lover's face as he had held her in his arms was enough. She would make his heaven, though she passed through purgatory to do it. She scarcely realized the full force of what she was going to do—love held her in too strong a grip. The world and its usages seemed futile and of little moment, beside this wonderful kingdom into which she had entered. She was too much of a child to look at things with a woman's insight, and too much of a woman to feel with a child's heart. She was indeed in dire straits.

She looked wistfully around her little blue-and-white room, with its dainty trifles, its frivolous nothings. At the dance-cards, the cotillion-favors, the pictures, flowers, frou-frous—

Some one knocked at the door and handed her a note. She started up, surprised. The sunlight was streaming into the room, filtering joyfully through the filmy curtains. Another day had begun. She took the note listlessly.

"Is there an answer?"

"No, ma'am. A soldier brought it early this morning."

Muriel studied the envelope a moment, curiously, and then tore it open with reckless haste. It was from Leonard!

"Do not suffer too much," he said. "My beloved! I have taken the only way! I could not sacrifice you. God has let me have the strength to—give you up. Oh, you sweet, sweet woman! I, who have touched you, held you, loved you—*let you go!* I had not the courage, dear! Pity me!—and thank me! I had rather die than lift a hand to drag you down! It is for the best. Let me go. I know, Muriel, that this is not the end. I am too near the eternal to doubt God's mercy. I love you! Can you hear me say that through the silence? Forgive me.

Remember only that I held your honor dearer than my life, and let you go out of my arms as white as you came into them."

She finished reading and was staring dumbly at the white bit of paper in her shaking hands, when the door was pushed open and her sister came slowly forward into the room.

"Muriel!" she cried, "Muriel!" and stopped. "You know?" she whispered, blankly.

"What?"

"That—that—oh, Muriel, I am afraid of you!"

"Tell me!"

"I cannot—oh, I cannot!"

"Tell me—please!"

"Captain Leonard—shot himself—at—three this morning!"

"Is he dead?"

Her voice rose and rang through the room like the wail of some lost soul.

"He died instantly, and—oh, Muriel, don't look that way—*don't!* He wasn't worth it. He deceived us all. He—"

"Yes—?"

"He was a married man, dear, and—his wife is coming to take his body home!"



A WANDERER'S LITANY

WHEN my life has enough of love, and my spirit enough of mirth,
When the ocean no longer beckons me, when the roadway calls no more,
Oh, on the anvil of Thy wrath, remake me, God, that day!

When the lash of the wave bewilders, and I shrink from the sting of the rain,
When I hate the gloom of Thy steel-gray wastes, and slink to the lamp-lit shore,
Oh, purge me in Thy primal fires, and fling me on my way!

When I house me close in a twilit inn, when I brood by a dying fire,
When I kennel and cringe with fat content, where a pillow and loaf are sure,
Oh, on the anvil of Thy wrath, remake me, God, that day!

When I quail at the snow on the uplands, when I crawl from the glare of the sun,
When the trails that are lone invite me not, and the half-way lamps allure,
Oh, purge me in Thy primal fires, and fling me on my way!

When the wine has all ebbd from an April, when the Autumn of life forgets
The call and the lure of the widening West, the wind in the straining rope,
Oh, on the anvil of Thy wrath, remake me, God, that day!

When I waken to hear adventurers strange throng valiantly forth by night,
To the sting of the salt-spume, dust of the plain, and width of the western slope,
Oh, purge me in Thy primal fires and fling me on my way!—

When swarthy and careless and grim they throng out under my rose-grown sash,
And I—I bide me there by the coals, and I know not heat nor hope,
Then, on the anvil of Thy wrath, remake me, God, that day!

ARTHUR STRINGER.

NICOTINE AND CAMBRIC

By Jeffery Farnol

RUTH laughed; not one of those low, musical laughs most heroines indulge in, but a good, round peal, warranted to carry from where we stood to the farthest confines of the coppice beyond.

I felt annoyed, for, knowing girls as I do, I had been careful to work the affair upon the accepted lines, from the light mood of laughing raillery to seriousness, from seriousness to earnestness; and had almost reached the point where I should have clasped her hand with a "strong yet gentle pressure," when she brought me up short with the laugh as aforesaid.

As I saw the mischief brimming in her eyes—blue eyes they are, by the way—I felt rather glad on the whole that I had not reached the hand-clasping stage; as it was, the situation was decidedly trying. However, I assumed an easy, unembarrassed attitude upon the gate, and flatter myself I did not show it.

"The situation seems rather to amuse you," I said, quite sarcastically for me, after a somewhat lengthy pause.

"I am so sorry I interrupted you," she answered, twisting a lace handkerchief of ridiculous proportions; "do go on, please."

I felt for my pipe, and knocking out the ashes upon the gate-post, shook my head. "Under the circumstances I don't think I will, although it seems to have caused you no end of enjoyment," I said, bitterly; "but, then, I suppose you are used to such—incidents."

"As for me," I continued, and here I grew impressive again—"as for me,

the whole affair has been fraught with much pain—with great pain, and—and—I give you my word it has. Good afternoon, Miss Brangwyn."

So saying, I raised my hat, and left her. She seemed rather surprised at my sudden departure, I thought, and for that matter so was I, but I had a feeling that my last speech, which should have been more than ordinarily affecting, had somehow or other "tailed off" ignominiously—hence my flight. That is the worst of me; I can usually carry everything before me, until I make a slip, and then I lose my head completely.

I walked away slowly, with a certain pensive droop of the head which I felt was eloquent of dead hopes and shattered aspirations. More than once, I had an almost overmastering desire to turn my head to see if she was watching, but checked the impulse—I am singularly strong-willed sometimes—and continued my melancholy way, until, having to climb a stile, I took advantage to glance furtively back. Ruth had disappeared. I sighed—heavily, I remember, and, sitting down, felt for my pipe—it was gone.

A feeling of loneliness and desolation took possession of me. I got down from the stile, and felt through my pockets—carelessly at first, then more slowly, and finally ended by turning out all their contents in a heap; but my search was vain. I remembered knocking my pipe out upon the gate-post—I must have left it behind in my hurry.

I had visions of it lying desolate in the wet grass beneath a night-black sky, abandoned, forgotten—but I

would return and find it again at all costs. Acting on this determination, I already had one leg across the stile when I caught the distant flutter of a skirt, and saw Ruth coming slowly down the path toward me. I paused, feeling totally incapable of facing her just then and running the gantlet of her mischievous eyes, with any chance of success.

The path was overshadowed by a tall hedge, just now pink with dog-roses, on the other side of which was a ploughed field. Without a moment's hesitation, I leaped the stile and began retracing my steps, safely screened from view behind this friendly hedge.

Presently, I paused to disengage my coat from a thorn, and, as I did so, heard a voice approach, singing.

Was it possible, I asked myself, as I peered cautiously through the brambles, that Ruth could be singing, actually singing, after what has passed so recently? It was possible. I felt pained and annoyed. I lay still, however, and it was well I did so, for she stopped almost directly opposite me, and reached up for a spray of roses, which—in a manner peculiar to the species—immediately swung up gently out of reach. I felt pleased, somehow.

"Bother!" exclaimed Ruth, and stood up on tip-toe. I was lying in a dry ditch, and Ruth was wearing a walking-skirt, so that I could see she was standing on tip-toe.

"You've got to come, you know," Ruth said, addressing the refractory blossoms through clenched teeth; "you've got to come;" whereupon she jumped, the first time unsuccessfully, and the second, but at the third attempt I heard a little cry of triumph, and saw her stand a moment to smooth the petals of the captured blooms with light, caressing fingers ere she went singing upon her way once more.

"That girl," I said to myself, as I sat in the ditch, rolling a cigarette, "that girl has the most wonderful ankles in the world;" and I lay back smoking dreamily, until, with a sudden pang, I remembered my lost pipe.

By the time I had reached the cop-

pice-gate, I was once more lost in a reverie.

"What was it," I asked myself, as I sat swinging my legs thoughtfully, "what was it about me that she always found so inextinguishably funny?"

I turned myself over, mentally, as it were, and viewed myself with a cold, impartial eye, but for the life of me failed to see it. Becoming aware that my cigarette was out, I pitched it away, and, the action reminding me why I was there, I got down upon my hands and knees, and began a careful search among the long grass.

I had sought vainly for about fifteen minutes, when I saw something white beneath the gate, and, raking it out, I beheld Ruth's handkerchief.

I spread it upon the palm of my hand and laughed. It was a ridiculous affair, as I have said, measuring about four inches square, surrounded by a deep fall of lace.

And yet there was something about it that forbade my laughter. A subtle fragrance, a faint, illusory sweetness, always associated with her, came to me, so that, glancing about me guiltily, I brushed it against my lips, and thrust it into my pocket.

I continued to seek my errant pipe with undiminished ardor and no success, until I at length uncovered a rabbit-burrow, and at once was seized with the idea that here, could I only get deep enough, was the end of my search, and the more I thought over it, the more likely it seemed.

Forthwith, I removed my coat, and, rolling up my sleeve, lay down, and thrust in my hand.

Deeper and deeper I went, and still with no success, and all the while I had tantalizing visions of my pipe lying within an inch of my fingers.

I was kicking furiously in my endeavors to gain that other inch when I was interrupted by a startled exclamation above me. Screwing round my head, I glanced up and beheld—Ruth. Somehow, I felt at a disadvantage.

"A-ah—you'll excuse me," I began.

"Oh, whatever is the matter?" she

broke in, and I fancied there was a note of real agitation in her voice. "Are you caught in a man-trap?"

"Thank you, no," I answered, making one last supreme effort for that "other inch;" "it isn't a man-trap."

"Why, then, what is it?" she cried, retreating precipitately, and eyeing me in unfeigned alarm.

"Merely looking for my pipe," I answered, giving up all hope of finding it, and endeavoring to withdraw my arm.

"Looking for your pipe?" she repeated, with a suspicious tremor in her voice.

"Yes," I answered; "I lost it down a rabbit-burrow, you know."

Of course, I may have looked rather a fool wriggling there, trying to free my arm, but I don't think so; anyhow she had no cause, and certainly no right, to go off into such a peal of laughter, especially that laugh of hers that always makes me feel so confoundedly "out of it."

"But how do you know it's there—down the rabbit-burrow?" she asked, as I resumed my coat, watching me with a laugh still in her eyes.

"Well, you see, I have examined every blade of grass hereabouts," I answered, rather stiffly for me; "and, for another thing, because I am morally certain that it is down there; a rabbit-burrow is just the kind of place a pipe of mine would choose to hide in."

"What do you intend to do about it?" she went on, more seriously.

"Borrow a spade, and dig him up!" I answered, promptly.

"But you can buy another," she demurred.

"Exactly! that's so like a woman," I said, smiling a superior smile. "I could buy another, of course, but you see a pipe doesn't happen to be a soulless thing like a—bonnet, for instance, that one can cherish for a day and forget the next."

"Besides," I continued, more pointedly, "it is a very prominent trait in my character that I am faithful—faithful even to such an undemonstrative thing as a pipe. How much more so then—?"

"Oh, I forgot," she broke in—"my handkerchief! I lost it this afternoon."

"Anything like this?" I inquired, maliciously, pulling out my own.

"Oh, no," she laughed; "quite different; besides it had lace at the edges and an 'R' embroidered in one corner."

"Lace," I repeated; "oh, then, of course—" and I crammed mine back into my pocket.

"And rather valuable," put in Ruth, beginning to search among the brambles.

I seated myself upon the gate and, rolling a cigarette, watched her. Her hair had become loosened, and hung low upon her cheeks—dark, glossy hair, somewhere between brown and black—and, as the smoke floated up from my cigarette, I busied myself trying to find the right word to describe it.

"I think you are horrid!" she said, turning upon me suddenly, her cheeks flushed with stooping.

"'Misty' is the word," I exclaimed, with my eyes upon her hair.

"I said 'horrid,' and so you are, to sit there sneering while I grope about and scratch myself horribly among these—these beastly brambles," and she stamped her foot at them.

"Pardon me," I replied, "I can't sneer; that is the worst of me, I often want to, but I can't."

"Well, then, why don't you get down and help me?"

"Most happy, if you really wish it," I said, rising and throwing away my cigarette; "I was only waiting to be asked."

Forthwith I fell to work, peering under bushes while she held up the trailing branches, and all the while the humor of it—and I have a keen sense of humor—seethed and bubbled within me, so that it was as well she could not see my face.

"You say it was a small handkerchief?" I asked, pausing after the vain investigation of a blackberry-bush.

"Yes, rather small," she replied.

"With a monogram in one corner?"

"With a monogram in one corner," she repeated, quite pettishly.

"Then the chances are, it has blown clean away," I said. "After all, you know, a handkerchief is not much to lose; such trifles are not worth while worrying over."

Ruth looked at me with a whole world of indignation in her eyes.

"Only a little while ago," she said, "I found a man writhing himself into the most frightful contortions, with his arm down a rabbit-burrow, and all on account of a pipe, if you please, and a most obnoxious thing at that."

As she spoke, I could not refrain from thrusting my hand into my pocket, and as my fingers closed upon a certain dainty fragment of cambric and lace, I smiled, perhaps a trifle exultantly.

"Ah, but there is a certain indefinable something about a pipe, that is beyond even the best woman's comprehension. Try and think of it—lying out there somewhere in the black night, desolate, abandoned, and let it share your pity."

Ruth looked away from me across the meadow.

"And what of my handkerchief?"

"Small, I think you said it was?"

"Small, with an 'R' embroidered in one corner, and edged with lace," she said, ticking off each item upon her fingers with exaggerated deliberation.

"Valuable lace?" I asked.

"Old point," she sighed, pushing aside a stray bramble with her shoe; "I did so treasure that handkerchief!"

"I'm very sorry, of course," I said, at the same time experiencing a strange exhilaration as my fingers wanted with it in the secrecy of my pocket. "Yes, very sorry, but I'm afraid you must give it up."

Somehow, at this juncture, the situation struck me as so peculiarly humorous that I felt I was going to laugh, so I turned away and coughed instead, rather an odd-sounding cough, I thought, but it passed Ruth, who only sighed again.

"I suppose I must," she said, with a last lingering glance toward the black-

berry-bushes, "but I would have given anything to have found it."

At her words, a sudden idea occurred to me. If I could manage to find it who knew what might happen? Involuntarily, I drew my hand from my pocket. As I did so, Ruth uttered a little cry, and next moment had disentangled something that fluttered from the button of my sleeve—it was her handkerchief. I was horrified, and, for a moment, my presence of mind deserted me, then I tried to look surprised.

"By Jove!" I began, but the flash of her eyes rendered me speechless again.

"How dared you?" she cried, facing me in hot anger; "how dared you?"

I felt uneasy; a wild longing came upon me to clear the gate at one terrific bound, and vanish in the woods beyond.

"Oh, how could you?" she cried again. "To let me search and search and scratch myself, and—and—oh, it was cruel!"

I really thought she was going to cry. I took a step nearer, murmuring something about its being an accident.

There were tears in her eyes, and I felt for all the world like some cold-blooded murderer—my utter depravity appalled me.

"I'm awfully sorry, you know," I stammered, venturing a step nearer yet. But she retreated before me hastily, drawing her skirts tight about her.

"Sorry!" she repeated, and whole volumes could not have expressed all the scorn she contrived to put into the single word.

"Please don't cry," I began, "because——"

"Cry!" she repeated, in the same way, and, upon my soul, when I came to look again, her eyes were as tearless as my own. I felt utterly at a loss.

"Go!" she continued; "and never, never dare to speak to me again."

She was wearing one of those short, tailor-made coats that fit close to the figure—Zouave I think they are called,

but I won't be sure—and I watched her unbutton it and thrust the unlucky handkerchief out of sight, with a sense of utter desolation upon me.

Then, all at once, I saw something peeping at me from her bosom—something that, as I watched, slipped from its sweet resting-place, and fell at my feet. I stooped and picked up my errant pipe. I gasped with wonder, and

turned it over in my hand, scarcely believing my eyes.

"Ruth," I said, softly.

She did not answer, but a wave of rich color crept up from chin to brow, and, for a moment, I hesitated, wondering; but, seeing how her lashes drooped, and how sweetly her mouth quivered, my hesitation vanished—and I understood.



OPIUM

I AM that one in whom worn hearts forget
 Their wasteful wage of sin-earned misery;
 Dear Circe of the sinful, I am she
 Whose face with others' tears is wet!

My voice is slow with murmur of the sea,
 My breast like green seduction of her graves—
 I bear the fevered heart, as on her waves,
 Until they drown beneath all memory.

I have no creed of life or loyalty,
 I have no joy of daring, or disdain
 Of perfidy; mine are the weary slain;
 The fallen, as to love, turn back to me.

In my betrayal certain madness lies,
 Of my desertion emperors have died;
 My soft embrace no bliss may safe deride,
 For I am she no man may dare despise.

My hair is stupor; languor-shaded deep
 My eyes, and dark with unsearched mystery;
 Men find Nirvana's prophecy in me,
 I am the timeless courtesan of Sleep!

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.



MRS. STUNSON—Willie, do you know that there is a brand-new baby boy next door?

WILLIE—Why, mama, I thought the woman who lived there was a real lady!

A SEASIDE CLIMAX

"I LOVE the sea," remarked Jeannette.
 "Then may I ask," said I,
 "Why, if you fancy things so wet,
 Your bathing-suit is dry?"

She did not think my humor apt,
 And gave me tit for tat:
 "The *ocean* isn't fresh," she snapped—
 "I like it, sir, for that.

"I like it, too," continued she,
 "Because it has some *sand*!"
 (I suffer from timidity,
 You doubtless understand.)

"I love it for its surf," she mused,
 "That bounds upon the shore."
 "Jeannette," I cried, "I'll be abused
 In metaphor no more!

"Come, let the blooming ocean go!"
 (I put my arm around her.)
 "I'll be your *serf*!" Said she, "Dear Joe,
 You really *are* a boulder!"

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW

HUSBAND (*reading*)—I see that old Dr. Saintly, who went off as a missionary,
 has been devoured by the cannibals.

WIFE—Too bad! He deserved a better fate.

"Yes; and the cannibals a better meal."



PRECOCITY

NODD—You don't mean to say your child said all those bright things?

TODD—Yes, sir.

"Why, I didn't know he could read yet."

OLD WADD'S LOVE-AFFAIR

By J. J. Bell

THE building at 196, St. George street was nigh a century old.

It appeared mean and melancholy beside the palatial edifices which had recently become its neighbors, and which seemed to look down from their lofty height of ornate, red sandstone upon its dingy gray walls and plain, narrow windows with pitiless pride and superiority.

Time was when merchant princes had their counting-houses in Number 196; but now, if you were to watch the entry for a day—nay, a week—you would probably fail to detect, among those who passed in and out, a single individual whose bearing suggested even moderate prosperity in the paths of commerce. The offices within were occupied by strugglers, youthful and aged, eager and tired, hopeful and despairing, and a removal was more likely to betoken a failure than a success. Yet there were among the tenants a few who had spent the greater, if not the better, parts of their lives in the old place, making ends meet year by year by the simple expedient of tight-lacing the waist of existence till it could be girded by the inelastic belt of circumstance. Of such was Mr. Wadd, or William Borland Wadd, writer and notary public, as the blurred, painted letters on the left-hand wall of the entry designated him.

Were you calling upon Mr. Wadd for the first time, you would advance for some yards into the dusky entry, which smelt of more pipe-clay than it exhibited, and climb a flight of worn steps guarded by an iron rail which had once been green. On the first

landing you would be greeted with the sign:

William B. Wadd, Writer, Up-stairs.

Thus encouraged, you would ascend to the next floor, where you would find:

Wm. B. Wadd, Writer, Up-stairs.

Rising a story higher, you would read:

W. B. Wadd, Up-stairs.

And, finally, you would reach the top floor, and behold:

Mr. Wadd.

Following the direction of the finger, you would come to a door with a brass plate bearing his full designation, and a great deal of dirt and oxidation, and a hook from which a knocker had once hung. As you would be unable to open the door, you would pull the small brass bell-knob, the only thing in the vicinity with any pretensions to polish, and, before the tinkling had ceased, you would see the door slowly opened by a string from Mr. Wadd's sanctum—and hear a voice exclaim:

"Come straight in; straight in."

Accepting the invitation, you would pass through an unoccupied outer office containing a high, double desk, a couple of stools, and a stand bearing a copying-press—no other furniture; and you would enter the private room, the door of which was also manipulated with a string, to find yourself in the presence of William Borland Wadd,

writer and notary public, a little, clean-shaven man, gray and partly bald, with a long, beaky nose, and small, bright, spectacled eyes.

In a brief glance round the room, this is what you would behold: A pair of small-paned, dirty windows, and between them, on a dingy red wall, a map of the world as it was colored fifty years ago; to the right, a huge bookcase with several of its dusty panes cracked or broken and its sparse contents leaning at various angles, as if they had grown wearied—they were certainly heavy works—of standing at the perpendicular, and a mantelpiece decorated with empty ink bottles; to the left, a couple of mahogany chairs with threadbare horse-hair seats, a metal umbrella-stand, which would startle you by weakly collapsing did you seek to make use of it, and a couple of old engravings spotted and yellow on the margins; against the remaining wall, a table laden with folded and tape-bound documents and a number of deed-boxes.

In the centre of the uncarpeted floor, at one side of a massive consulting desk littered with papers, on a revolving chair which groaned when he moved, you would see Mr. Wadd, his slippered feet resting on a burst hassock, and his rheumatic fingers partly covered by brown mittens, holding the pen by means of which he terrified small debtors and sustained his own solitary existence. And then, of course, you and he would get to business, which is none of ours.

Mr. Wadd's most important clients were a number of large wholesale firms who had dealings with thousands of small retailers throughout the country, and who endeavored to keep down bad debts by pulling up all customers whose accounts were, without sufficient reason, overdue. He had also a connection with big stores that supplied private parties. Every month or so, Mr. Wadd, or "poor old Wadd," as the bookkeepers called him, received several bundles of accounts, few of them over five pounds, with instructions to recover the amounts due from

the respective debtors. He charged a shilling—plus a penny for postage—for each letter he wrote, and, further, obtained a small commission on the money returned. It was a poor enough income that he made, but he had no one dependent upon him, and, so far as any one knew or cared, he was never in actual want.

He was a wretched scribe—it has been related that a rural grocer once mistook a most threatening demand for immediate payment for a congratulatory note upon a recent addition to his family—but, as a rule, his communications were deciphered by the unfortunate persons to whom they were addressed, and in quite a number of cases payment was forthcoming. The letters usually began with an expression of surprise at the overdue state of the account, went on to threaten court proceedings, and concluded with the words, "Blame yourself for the expenses." Debtors who were able to pay nearly always remitted the money direct to the firms, but now and then a cheque or postal-order came to Mr. Wadd, and such an arrival was an event in his existence. Exchanging his slippers for his boots, his mittens for gloves, and donning a furry silk hat he would leave his office, not forgetting to affix to the door a card bearing the legend, "Back presently," and would hobble to the address of the firm, whose money he carried with exaggerated care in a special pocket inside his waistcoat. Inquiring for the head of the firm, who was usually willing to "humor old Wadd," he would be shown into the great man's private room.

"My dear sir," he would say, "I am happy to inform you that I have this day received from Thomas Slow—or another party—of Drumdenny—or another place—full payment of his account due to you—two pounds, seven shillings and fourpence—and have returned his account duly discharged."

The head of the firm, thus saved from bankruptcy, would simply congratulate and thank Mr. Wadd, who, after paying over the money and taking

a receipt for it, would return to his shabby office one of the proudest men in all the city, and, resuming his slippers and mittens, would proceed with redoubled zest to indite threatening requests, or still more threatening reminders, to the debtors on his list who required them. As a matter of fact, he enjoyed his work, and prosecuted it with an enthusiasm worthy of a happier cause. No lover longing to pour forth his heart, ever plunged pen in ink and put it to paper more eagerly than did Mr. Wadd when writing to some luckless tradesman who had had the temerity to ignore a previous epistle, and no treaty affecting the world's welfare could have been signed more proudly than his receipt for sums under five pounds sterling.

There was a dignity about the old man which, having regard to his humble circumstances, was really pathetic, although it struck most of those who came in contact with him as simply ridiculous; and he had a way of interrupting clients, who had called to consult him, by taking off his spectacles, wiping them with a large yellow handkerchief, and saying, "I well recollect a case in which I was successful," thereafter going into the most minute details of some trifling small-debt action, while the client vainly endeavored to get back to his own matter.

Between the hours of nine and six, Mr. Wadd rarely left his office except on business. At one o'clock precisely, he lunched at his desk on four small wine-biscuits and a glass of villainous sherry at a shilling a bottle. Still, it was sherry, and the name itself was respectable. Perhaps, as he sipped the rank stuff, he remembered the days of his apprenticeship, when his wealthy principals partook of biscuits and sherry in their private room, and talked of thousands and tens of thousands in the airiest fashion conceivable, for, though full forty years had passed since then, he had not lost the trick of nodding to an imaginary partner ere he put his lips to the glass. But Mr. Wadd had never had a partner. Once, long ago, when business looked brighter,

he had engaged a clerk, but the brightness had soon faded and the clerk had departed. So he was used to solitude by day, while his evenings were spent in an old-fashioned tavern, over tobacco and ale, in company with any habitué who was willing to listen, or pretend to listen, to his innumerable recollections of cases.

But it is time to quit the discussion of Mr. Wadd himself, and to come to the tale of how he once fell a victim to sentiment and yet retained his business principles, of how his heart beat softly while his hand wrote harshly; and of how, at sixty-six, he found the first debtor who had ever gained his sympathy.

It happened two years ago. The only other tenant on the top flat of 196, St George street was a young artist, Paul Vannan, by name, who had occupied his studio for a quarter ere Mr Wadd set eyes on him, during which period he provided a daily irritation to the writer's nerves. He seemed to be a merry-hearted fellow, for he mounted the stairs whistling loudly, and shut his door with a careless slam that caused Mr Wadd to jump in his chair, and mutter: "The next time he does that I'll go out and give him a piece of my mind." But, somehow, Mr Wadd never fulfilled his threat, and, indeed, after a few months, he grew to like the whistling, and ceased to start at the slamming of the door.

They met for the first time on the stair, one Spring forenoon about eleven o'clock. Mr Wadd had just received payment of a debt of nearly three pounds, and was on his way to hand it over to his client, feeling as important as if he were the governor of the Bank of England. He heard the whistling below him, and presently the young man appeared.

For a moment, Mr Wadd clean forgot his errand. He had often wondered what the artist was like, but now there was the last face that might have been pictured in his imagination. Years and years ago he had seen it in

the flesh—but then it had been the face of a woman, a woman who, he remembered, with something like a shock, had married an artist.

"A fine morning," said the young man, cheerfully, as he passed, wondering why the other had given him such a startled, wistful look.

"A fine morning," returned Mr. Wadd, recovering himself half-a-dozen steps lower.

Then he proceeded upon his business, but his client afterward remarked to his partner:

"Old Wadd wasn't so pleased with himself to-day as usual."

During the next week or two, Mr. Wadd fell into the habit of listening for the whistler coming up the stair. "Like a bird, like a bird!" he would murmur to himself, and, when the studio door slammed, he would smile and return to his work.

One May morning, they met on the stair a second time and exchanged greetings, and a few mornings later Mr. Wadd left his office when he heard the whistling, and descended to the street merely to gain a sight of the young man. He was so ashamed of himself that for some days he tried not to hear the whistling. But the attraction was too strong, and, again and again, he went down-stairs, trying to appear on business bent, as Paul Vannan came up, and, after waiting in the entry for a minute, ascended to his chambers in a stealthy fashion as if he feared detection.

The old man had fallen in love with the young. There is no other way of expressing it. Not for forty years had his heart warmed to a fellow-being as it warmed to the unconscious artist. He wondered if the other were successful, and took to halting beside picture dealers' windows and peering in as he walked to his lodging in the evenings in the hope of discovering a work by Paul Vannan.

And his search was at last rewarded, for, in a certain window, he found two small landscapes with tickets bearing the artist's name. He knew nothing about pictures; he had never desired

to see any work a second time; but now he became an art critic, and found fault with all paintings not by Paul Vannan. He spent an evening hunting around the walls of a large exhibition, and came away weary and disgusted because Paul Vannan was not represented. He inquired of his acquaintances at the tavern, and, when one and all asserted that they had never even heard of Paul Vannan, he quickly lost his temper, and railed at them for a parcel of fools. And yet, beyond a passing remark on the weather, he had not exchanged a word with the young man.

During the Summer, the studio was closed, the artist being at work in the country, and Mr. Wadd yearned to hear the whistling on the stairs. It was not till the middle of October that he heard it, and, when the welcome sound reached him, he hobbled forth in his slippers and mittens, a very excited and gladdened old gentleman. But, when Paul approached him, he was tongue-tied, and his thoughts became confusion.

"A fine morning," remarked the young man, pleasantly, as he stepped toward his studio.

"A fine morning," returned Mr. Wadd, with an effort, pretending he was going down-stairs.

The studio door slammed, and—and that was all! The old man went back to his den, feeling that he would never be any nearer to his beloved.

A month passed with occasional meetings on the stair, and then the whistling ceased. The artist still came regularly to his studio, but he arrived in silence and shut the door quietly. Mr. Wadd began to experience a sore dread. What ailed Paul? He always spoke to himself of the young man as Paul.

After a while, he could bear the suspense no longer. One morning, he stood with his ear to the inside of his office door until he heard footsteps. Whereupon he went out and descended the stairs. Vannan gave him greeting, but not in his familiar cheery voice, and, presently, Mr. Wadd re-

turned to his room with the knowledge, gained from a glance in passing, that his beloved was in trouble. Weeks went on, but the whistling and slamming were not resumed, and, by the New Year, the old man was in a fever of anxiety and misery.

His cup was filled when, on a January afternoon, the manager of the General Stores, Limited, called upon him to request him to take steps to recover the sum of fifteen pounds, twelve and sixpence, for goods supplied to Paul Vannan, Esq.

"Funny thing," observed the manager, "the party has his studio on this very floor. But I don't suppose he'll fall upon you and murder you. It's a bigger amount than usual, but we thought it would be all right. He paid regularly for nearly two years, but, after all, we can't depend on those artist fellows. Write him a stiff one, and, if he doesn't pay in three days, you had better take out a summons."

Mr. Wadd stared helplessly at the document in his hand.

"It—it doesn't seem so very much overdue," he stammered.

"Oh, the account's old enough. We've given him plenty of reminders, and the chances are that he's in deep water all round. We've been gentle with long-winded folk before, and paid for it. So give him one of your terrors, Mr. Wadd, and let me know the result. Afternoon!" and the manager hurried away, saying to himself: "Surely the old boy is failing. He never recalled a single case that he had been successful in."

Left to himself, Mr. Wadd laid the account on his desk, and groaned in despair.

"Poor fellow, poor fellow!" he sighed. "I might have refused the case, but that wouldn't have helped him. Some one else would have taken it in hand. What's to be done? What's to be done?"

For a moment, he thought of stepping across to the studio. But no! that was impossible. He could not face Paul in such circumstances. The young man was proud, so much might

be read in his face; and it would hurt him to be offered assistance by a complete stranger. Wherefore assistance must be given anonymously. But how?

Suddenly, a way occurred to Mr. Wadd—a beautiful way. He left his desk and opened a small safe concealed in the bookcase. Mr. Wadd had no bank account. It had never seemed worth while opening one.

Presently, he departed from his office, forgetting to affix the customary intimation to the door. Ten minutes later, he was staring aghast at a picture dealer's window. The pictures he had come to see were gone. Trembling, he entered the shop, and the dealer eyed the shabby old figure curiously. Stammering, Mr. Wadd asked a question.

"No," said the dealer, "they aren't sold. They are still here."

He did not offer to show the landscapes. Surely this was no buyer. But Mr. Wadd laughed softly, and inquired the price.

"Ten guineas apiece," said the dealer. "Vannan is a coming man."

He thought he was as likely to get ten guineas as five.

Mr. Wadd fumbled in his breast pocket and brought forth a handful of notes and gold.

"I have only nineteen pounds with me," he said, with a sigh. "Will you trust me for the balance till next week?"

Something touched the dealer.

"You wish the pictures? You like them? Well, I think Mr. Vannan might let you have the pair for nineteen pounds. I'll inquire of him."

"No, no! Give them to me now, and take the money, and let me pay the balance next week. Take down my name and address"—he gave it—"but pray do not mention them to the artist. Promise me that, sir, promise me that!"

Eventually, the old man got matters his own way, and returned to his office with a parcel under each arm. Having removed the coverings, he set the pictures upon the two chairs on his

right, and admired them for several minutes.

"Clever fellow! clever fellow!" he muttered. "Paul will soon get past his troubles and be a great man."

He sat down at his desk and took up the account against the artist. He began to chuckle.

"It's the best joke," he said to himself, "the best joke that ever was! Paul will never suspect. He'll never imagine when he passes me on the stair that I've a pair of his fine pictures in here. He'll think I've nothing here but a pen and ink and paper and a nasty way of putting them together. Well, well, it's a good joke! And Paul will soon be whistling again! Now I'll just write the boy one of my stiff ones, as they call 'em."

He chuckled once more as he laid a sheet of notepaper before him.

The letter was still unsigned when the bell rang. A boy entered with a note for the writer, and asked for an answer. The note was from the manager of the General Stores, Limited, and was to the effect that a cheque had just

been received from Mr. Vannan, so that Mr. Wadd need not go further in the matter. It concluded with the hope that Mr. Wadd had not posted his demand for payment. The old man drew a long breath.

"Say that it's all right, all right," he said to the messenger.

When the boy had gone, he sat still for nearly half an hour. Then he left his desk, and, having lit the gas, examined his purchases once more, and admired them.

"Paul will find the money useful, anyhow," he murmured, as he laid them carefully in a cupboard beneath the bookcase. He was later than usual in leaving his office that night.

Next morning, he sat at his desk listening, listening, listening. And at last his eyes brightened and his face grew radiant.

"He's whistling!" he said softly to himself.

The studio door slammed.

Mr. William Borland Wadd, writer and notary public, was quite happy.



IF WE SHOULD WAKE

IF we should wake, the long, long slumber through,

The centuries had spread upon us two,

Before the sounding of the trump on high,

Softly to stir, and quietly to lie

And listen to the falling of the dew,

I think the single, perfect rose that blew

Over your head, would turn to greet my few

White violets, and, smiling, we should sigh,

If we should wake.

And I should whisper through the sod to you,

"Did you rest well, sweetheart?" and, through the blue,

God's choir would sound, as you made soft reply,

"I rested well, and it was sweet to die

And rest in hope of heaven coming true,

If we should wake!"

ETHEL M. KELLEY.

THE GOLD BOOK

By Edgar Saltus

"BRADSTREET'S" is very depressing. It tells you how much money other people have. But, presumably, they need it. Eothen, after describing the burial of a pilgrim, remarked, genially, "I did not say, Alas!—nobody ever does, that I know of—but I thought that the old man had got rather well out of the scrape of being alive and poor." The pilgrim died in Jerusalem; he died a long time ago, at a place and at a period when the tax on living was not rapacious. What Eothen would have said had the poor chap died in New York, for the life of us we cannot conjecture. To live in New York costs, said Mark Twain, "a little more than you've got."

This view, while it does not make "Bradstreet's" any the less upsetting, rather consoles you, don't you know, when you come to think of other people's efforts to keep in the swim. Some of these efforts must be quite unholy. "Bradstreet's" is, therefore, not merely upsetting, but uplifting. It inspires such beautiful thoughts.

But "Bradstreet's," though elevating, is not elegant. It lacks the pageantry which the "Almanach de Gotha" provides. It gives ratings, not romance. There are no pedigrees in it—none of the perfumes that once exhaled from the "Libro d'Oro"—the "Book of Gold"—in which the first families of Venice shone. These things "Bradstreet's" omits, and these are things which no local work supplies. A plea, then, for something of the kind. Blessed as we are with first families, we should be blessed also with

a gold book in which they, too, could shine.

Such a work would be nice to have about the house. It would be very serviceable in other ways. The *fine fleur* that glowed in the Venetian work is quite phantasmal now. In the "Almanach" trees are falling; there is a steady diminution of good old names abroad. At their increasing extinction European genealogists are reported to be disturbed. A book illustrative of local conditions would reassure them. It would show that American industry can make good any deficit in Europe. In this line we are accumulating quite a surplus. Then, too, consider the reports from other lands.

In China, for instance, is the family of Confucius, which, after an existence of over two thousand years, persists luxuriantly to-day. In India there are rajahs—we would give their names if we could spell them—whose ancestry extends back twice as far. In Spain there are the Osunas, whose ancestry extends yet further—to Geryon who tended the flocks of the Sun. In Abyssinia is Menelik, with, behind him, the Queen of Sheba and Solomon. And in Wales there are the Mostyns, whose pedigree, seventy feet long, begins with Noah, proceeds royally through the Old Testament, on through the Plantagenets and thence down, or rather up, to them. These are old families.

You may say that that is all nonsense. But then, you see, we have also our *jeux d'esprit*. Local genealogists, to their own delight, perhaps,

and certainly to ours, have discovered among us a regiment of descendants from Alfred the Great and, with them, quite an army descending from other and yet greater sovereigns.

Beside Noah and Solomon, mere European kings are, perhaps, not much to boast of. But genealogy can do better by us than that. The original settler hereabouts was glacial man. There is no valid reason why our first families should not discover that they descend from him. To the outer world they are rumored to be sufficiently chilly to make such a pedigree credible. Then, with indicated escutcheons—icicles, for instance, on fields of brass—and assorted mottoes—such, for example, as *Pourquoi Pas?*—not omitting appropriate crests—triple tiaras might be fetching—they would have trees beside which European varieties would be but bushes. For that matter, where there are trees, here could be forests. Forests rather dim, perhaps, and, perhaps, too, rather green, yet highly ornamental, and so perfectly adapted to the cultivation of titles.

The glamour of these, the taint of endemic trade would not diminish. On the contrary, trade is becoming very fashionable. In England, you begin by being smart and end by going into trade. Here, you begin by going into trade and end by being stupid. It is quite the same process, as you may see, with only this difference, that in England you may get a barony for your trouble. Many have—so many that the Duke of Grafton, remarking to Thurlow on the subject, was reminded that in the House of Lords he could not look before him, behind him or on either side of him, without seeing peers that owed their seats to commerce.

Were these seats owed, instead, to the Conquest, they might be less comfortable. The gang that came over with William was a rum lot. Hume says that their birth was mean and their station low. Thierry calls them *canaille*. But time is a great costumer. In the perspectives of its corri-

dors you cannot tell plebs from patricians, and, even if you could, what difference would it make, provided, of course, that in the interim the tree or the forest has sprouted? There is the one point for local genealogists to consider.

For starter, what could be better than our glacial man? There is nothing *canaille* about him; moreover, he antedates the remotest rajah. It is true he is extinct, but then that is such an advantage! He cannot pop up and deny you. Besides, extinction is becoming so modish. The best names in Europe are—or were—the De Veres of England, the Fitzgeralds of Ireland and the Montmorencys of France. Of the three, the first and last are gone—They have faded in the subsidence which is disturbing genealogists.

Yet, for the comfort of the latter, it is worth noting that some really authentic families still survive. Scotland has a lot. So has Ireland. England has more. Of these, the Herberts and Howards are typical. The Howards, though not of the most ancient origin imaginable, are of the best lineage, by reason of intermarriages with the bluest blood—with the De Veres, for instance, with the De Cliffords and with the Gowers, whose chief, the Duke of Sutherland, holds one of the oldest peerages extant. But the Earl of Mar runs him close. The present incumbent is the twenty-sixth of his name.

France also has some old families. Among these descent from a crusader constitutes the best *souche*. But in the male line there are precious few left; so few that genealogists can count but one—the d'Arbussons. Other good names, such as Rohan, Uzès, Montbazon, Noailles, La Tremouille, de la Tour d'Auvergne, Grammont and La Rochefoucauld are august, perhaps, but not antique. By way of compensation there are in France four thousand persons that possess transmissible titles. The number is awful to contemplate. Yet what is it beside the full half-million which, at last accounts, Russia could show?

The nobility of Spain is plentiful,

also. There are *grandeas* by the acre, but not *sangre azul* by the pail—not the blood, free from Moorish and Hebraic admixture, of which the *hidalgo* is made. Barring the Ossunas and royalty, there is not a house in the realm a bit ancients than the cream of French cream. It is the same in Germany. In Italy alone you still get an echo of departed days.

In Italy are the Colonnas, the Massimi, the Orsini, the Strozzi, the Tutti Quanti—particularly the latter—all of whom go back to the fourth century, and some further yet. These are the oldest families in Europe. The Massimi descend—or claim to—from Fabius Maximus, and the Colonnas from Colonnus, a cousin of Nero. There is not merely age, but imagination. Here, now, is a little art. In the Colonna gallery is a picture of the Resurrection in which scions of the house are represented as receiving exclusive attention Above. The modesty of that you might think rather hard to beat. But in the gallery of the ducal family of Levis—which, according to their account, descends from Judah—there is a picture representing one of the lot standing, hat in hand, before the Virgin, who says, "*Mon cousin, couvrez-vous.*"

These, of course, are but agreeable instances of legitimate family pride. We have nothing so spacious here, and even glacial man could hardly help us to it. But then ours is a new country. It lacks modesty, it lacks art and also the *Seize Quartiers* which, heraldically, are the real test of blood, or, more exactly, of birth—the sesame which discloses, not a problematic and tortuous descent from people that never existed or who must have been ashamed of themselves if they did, but a direct and authentic ascent to sixteen great-great-grandparents, all entitled to ensigns armorial, and, as such, gentlemanfolk, though not necessarily noble. For, don't you see, precisely as a man may be a gentleman without being noble, so may he be a nobleman without being in the least genteel.

On the contrary! And so obviously

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that the old rule used to be that a patent of nobility, though it ennobled the beneficiary, did not convert his descendants into gentlemanfolk until the third generation was reached. That converting was the great thing. It conferred a quality so esteemed that the highest pledge a king could give was his word as a gentleman. Said the fourth Henry of France, "The title of gentleman is the fairest that I possess."

Now, what did he mean by that? In this country, a colored felon, black as the ace of spades, has been overheard referring to a fellow-culprit, blacker, if possible, and more felonious than he, as "that other gentleman." So are terms delightfully twisted; conceptions also; standards as well. But, then, never yet has an exact definition been provided. Those that we have are pertinent, but not precise. They lack the reagent from which a test can be made. That, though, is perhaps due to the fact that into the composition of the breed there enter certain elements that are not readily resolved.

Genealogically, a gentleman must, of course, be third in descent and, locally, he must have inherited a million. If he has inherited ten million, then his descent be hanged! Though his mother were a cook and his father a crook, he is it. Elsewhere, the severity of these requirements are tempered. In Germany and Austria, you need not have a penny, but you must have quarterings. Without the latter Cræsus himself could not get in. He would not be regarded as "born." The Faubourg, also, is less severe than we are. The Faubourg does not object to money and has a *penchant* for race, but it particularly likes dullness. It is very gentlemanly there to be heavy on hand. London is more like New York. London admires trees, but prefers estates.

So much, then, for genealogy. As you see, the test is lacking. So it is with jurisprudence. Legally, a gentleman is one who has studied the laws of the realm and does no manual labor. That is concise, but not convincing. Theory is better. Theoretically, a

gentleman is one who displays courage and courtesy. Add simplicity to that and you come near getting a decent definition. The more simplicity you add, the nearer you come. The Czar of All the Russias may wear—and probably does—when he has to, the closed and imperial crown of state with as little arrogance as a plain woman wears an unbecoming hat. But affectation of any kind, though often endearing and always amusing, is never well-bred. Here endeth the first lesson.

The second concerns the lady. A lady is the gentleman's perfect complement. Or rather, was. In sedater days, a lady was careful to do nothing important. That was the occupation of the *grande dame*. In society, as constituted to-day, there are women in plenty that are *grandes dames* and more yet that are damn grand. There is progress.

Mere males are less advanced. In addition to other characteristics, some of which are rather old-fashioned, they are likely to hold that getting one's name in the papers in connection with smart functions is no more a proof of gentility than a new way of being dull is evidence of original thought. Yet when a hostess does give out their names, they do not bear malice. As Cardinal Newman remarked, a gentleman is always too indolent for that.

Such, then, are the hallmarks of gentlefolk. In the disappearance of old families abroad, these things must there be diminishing. In the appearance of old families here, locally they must be increasing. The logic of that admitted, it follows that in the passing of European gentility is the chance for American push.

And high time, too! Society here

has rather lacked, don't you know, what you might call initiative. In modes and manners, society over the way has been its model. There is no harm in that. But, being a progressive people, it is only natural that we should wish now to see our own society begin to set the fashions, and, while it is at it, to rule the roost.

The idea, natural in itself, becomes practical when you realize that the women here are the best looking in the world, and the men the best off. Escutcheons, quarterings, family-trees, are all very well, but, throw them in or throw them out, and not for a second will they weigh in the balance with bank-accounts and beauty. There is an outfit that knocks spots out of any ancestry, however distinguished or extinguished. Add brains to it, and it beats any nobility, however famous or infamous. Brains, bank-accounts and beauty make a sum total, not genteel merely, but ideal: beauty, because it is the heart's desire; bank-accounts, because we have no other god than Mammon; and brains, because, when men have that, they survive even death, particularly "Bradstreet's" and even the "Almanach de Gotha."

There is the real thing! There is the aristocracy the nation awaits. If it waits long enough, it ought to get it, don't you think, and with it, of course, a proper almanach—an "Almanach du Got There," if you like—which, in supplying points as well as pedigrees, not only romance but ratings, facts and figures in addition to family-trees, will tell at a glance who's what and why, and provide the world in general—including society at large—with what both lack and always have lacked—a decent "Libro d'Oro," a practical Book of Gold.



A CLEAN JOB

FIRST DOCTOR—How did you get along with your last appendicitis operation?

SECOND DOCTOR—I removed both the appendix and the man.

THE STRUGGLE

By Emery Pottle

THE café was crowded. It was luncheon hour, and every table was taken. The squat, low-ceiled basement had a confused, not unattractive, look—an unformed mass of men, tables, white-aproned waiters, artificial palms, bizarre gilt and rococo work, all reflected a dozen times over in the plate-glass mirrors along the walls, and all wavering hazily through the blue-gray tobacco-smoke that blurred over the room.

Haideen paused irresolutely at the entrance and gazed at the scene. Ordinarily, he took a seat, the first that offered itself, and ate his food with that degree of indifference and speed which is acquired only by the city-bred American, impatient of any necessary exercise not conceived and worked out by his own brain.

To-day, however, Haideen felt a sudden distaste for the familiar place. He hated the idea of eating; the recurrent waves of high-pitched talk irritated him; the hot, stale smell of cooking was unendurable; and the sight of so many human beings consuming food struck him as brutally vulgar.

He was just turning away from it all when Garrett saw him and sent a waiter to fetch him to his table. Garrett and Lidell were lunching together. As Haideen walked indecisively over to them, he noticed that the heavy, bearded face of the former was flushed and that his red-veined hands shook. The two greeted him, effusively.

"Sit down, Haideen, you old piker," shouted Garrett. "Eat with us."

Haideen's thin lips curled slightly, but his voice kept to its usual calm indifference.

"Thanks, no," he said. "I—I've lunched. I was just going."

"Well, have a drink, anyway," insisted Lidell.

"Yes, young fellow, you've got to have a drink. Here, waiter! Come here! Give this gentleman a drink, d'ye hear? What do you want?"

It was useless to protest. Haideen gave his order, and sat down at the table.

"Make that three," added Garrett, importantly.

"How's that plan working out in your head, Haideen? Going to beat me and Lidell here, too, eh? Got the finest library ever built, have you?"

Garrett leaned heavily on the table and leered at Haideen.

"Oh, I've got an idea stowed away in my head," Haideen answered, good-naturedly enough, inwardly cursing Garrett's coarseness.

"Well, 'twon't do. 'Tisn't good enough. We've got you young chaps, you sapling architects, pushed back to the tall timber," continued Garrett, laughing boisterously.

Haideen smiled.

"I dare say," he said, shortly. In his heart, he knew that Garrett was probably speaking the truth. "Garrett & Lidell" was an old established firm of architects and their plans commanded the highest consideration and price. "Oh, I dare say, Garrett, that you and Lidell will make butter balls out of us all," he added.

The waiter brought their order.

"Here's to the best man—the man who wins!" cried Garrett. Haideen drank hastily and started to rise.

Garrett laid his hand on his arm.

"You're all right, Haideen," he said, a little thickly, "but what you want is success!"

Lidell laughed appreciatively at the joke.

Garrett's fat, puffy hand tightened round his cocktail-glass till the thin goblet snapped and crumpled and the liquid trickled to the cloth in an unsightly red stain.

"There! See that! You want to be able to do that—and not care a damn. I can pay for it. Here, waiter, bring me another of these."

Haideen muttered something and went out quickly, his nerves on edge.

"Damned cad," he thought, as he returned to his office and climbed on the high stool before his drawing-board; "beast!"

II

HAIDEEN sat moodily smoking a cigarette, making idle marks with his pencil. The front elevation plan of the new city library, on which he was at work, seemed to fix itself in thin black lines on his brain. It occurred to him that his conception was hopelessly commonplace; Haideen had that rare ability to criticize, with accurate impersonality, his own productions. His fingers closed on a penknife, and he was on the point of slitting the drawing from end to end. Then, with a sigh, he dropped the blade, and fell to work with a dull, dogged persistence.

After an hour of it, he pushed back his stool angrily and struck the table in helpless exasperation.

"It's no use. I can't get it. What the devil ails me?" he muttered, but his face relaxed into a grim smile.

"Guess I know the trouble, all right. I wouldn't have believed him six months ago, if some chap had told me it would take like this. Beats anything what a row a girl will make in a man's mind—can't work, can't think, can't sleep! Ugh! If I could only forget Hester for a month!"

Haideen pulled out his watch to note the time, but his glance, instead, caught the photograph stuck into the

case. His keen, defensive eyes smiled gently back at the girl's face smiling up at him; the haggard shadows of his dark, thin face softened amazingly, and he lost the hard lines about his mouth. Any one seeing the man at that moment would have called him handsome.

Presently, he went to his desk, wrote a note, and, calling a messenger-boy, despatched it at once.

DEAR HESTER:

Won't you dine with me to-night at the old place—Pierre's—about seven?

PHIL.

It was three o'clock as he put on his hat and coat and left his office.

"Can't do any more—or any less—to-day. I'll walk in the Park—maybe that will settle my nerves."

More than a year before, Haideen had met Hester Langdon. He was then a man past thirty, of whom it was said that he was a "coming architect;" she was twenty-two. Utterly unused to women of Hester's sort—he had spent his boyhood in a small Middle West village, slaved himself through Harvard, and managed two lean Winters of study in the Paris architectural schools, after which had come the years of grinding novitiate in New York—Haideen eyed her prettiness and her quick, flashing humor with a suspicion which kindled to admiration and later to humble reverence, in one evening.

He went home from that little studio-supper, whither some friend had dragged him, chewing irritably on an unlighted cigar, and, with the masculine unreason at an unattainable effect, railed cynically at the cause. "In heaven's name, what have I to do with—girls—anyway! Not a cent in the world and—and Lord knows they're not worth much to a man who's got his row to hoe. It's not for you, my boy."

Just why Haideen went again to that studio in the hope of—well, "any old thing that might be amusing," he put it, and eagerly asked Miss Langdon if he might walk home with her, he could not tell. Nor did he attempt

really to explain why, for two months, he called on Hester, took her to drive, or to dine at Pierre's—the suave old Italian's place down-town—and sent her flowers.

Then, all at once, he knew that he loved her. And, for another month, he stayed resolutely away, quite oblivious of the fact that he was bewildering and hurting her. He tried to avoid her, worked desperately at his office, until one day he met her face to face in the Park. She was passing him with a quiet, cool nod, when he stopped her suddenly.

"Don't," he said, helplessly, "don't, I can't bear it! I've missed you so!"

And she, since that day when they sat together in the Spring sunshine and talked hesitatingly and long, had been very gentle with him, and had understood.

It was part of his code that a man had no right to marry a girl until he had firmly established himself in business—"hit it off all right," as he said. The constantly recurring thought of this principle made him moody and morose. When he was with Hester, matters seemed easy and simple of solution, but, alone, the black shadow of his poverty and delayed success came between him and happiness; he almost lost faith in himself. And hourly his love of Hester grew.

It was in some such strained mental state as this that Haideen got the chance of entering a competition for the library. There were half-a-dozen firms in the contest—firms, like Garrett & Lidell, of formidable strength. Ordinarily, Haideen's confident belief in his own abilities would have buoyed him up in such a struggle, but now the deadly significance of the issue weighted him down like lead. Should he win—well, it meant money, and more than money—recognition, security, brilliant future, opportunity, and Hester. If he lost—

This condition of fretted ambition and harassed emotions might, in another man, have given just that prick of the spur to hesitating talent which would have resulted in the

accomplishment of a brilliantly successful coup; with Haideen it acted in quite an opposite manner—his creative powers seemed to be atrophied.

As he strode nervously through the Park, the burden of life would not fall from him. For lack of something which should seize him by the shoulders and shake out of him the vapors of an over-sensitive brain, he helplessly allowed his gloom of spirit to master him. Indeed, he took a sullen pleasure in turning up the stones of his career, to look on their under side—the side the angels call truth, he assured himself.

By the time, therefore, that Haideen met Hester at Pierre's, he was in his worst mood, and greeted her with great solemnity.

"What is it?" she queried, smilingly, between the soup and the entrée. "Has a draughtsman gone and put somebody's nursery next the coal-cellar, or made a billiard-room without any doors?"

"Neither," Haideen said, crisply; she did not speak again for some minutes.

Over their coffee, Hester tried again to rouse him from his discouraging silence. For some reason, Hester felt very happy that night.

"How goes the finest library ever planned?"

He looked at her in annoyance that any one could jest on that topic.

"Rotten—thanks!" and relapsed again.

She began to draw on the menu-card, and presently pushed it toward him.

"Look there! There's a library as is one! It's really praiseworthy. I think it will take a prize. Phil, do you mind my competing against you? I work so fast I could do several, if I put my mind to it, like the girl in the rhyme."

Haideen tried to smile, but the attempt was a failure.

"If you only understood," he sighed, impatiently; "if you knew!"

"What, Phil?"

"Oh, nothing, Hester."

It seemed to Hester very unfair, his

treatment of her. Pierre's was dear to them both, and the untidy, shabby old place was fraught with some of their tenderest memories. Phil was not nice to spoil the evening like that. She was repelled, and made to feel like a child. After a few moments, she rose.

"Shall we go? I'm rather tired to-night."

Once back at his lodgings, Haideen was overcome with shame. He cursed himself for a brute and a cad. He wanted to go and put his head in Hester's lap and be comforted.

"Poor little girl—I'm not fit for her. I'm a sullen beast!"

But, instead, he wrote a penitent note begging forgiveness, and sent it by a messenger. The gentle trust and merry sweetness of Hester's answer cut him still deeper.

The rest of his night was spent in uneasy tossings, deeper resolves to win out at last, and aching longings.

III

MORNING brought Haideen no relief. He shut himself up in his little private room at the office and, for an hour, worked at the plans feverishly. At ten o'clock, he threw them aside.

"Great God! I think I could work my fingers to the very bone, and my brain to a little white spot if—if—only—no, I can't! It's foolish. She wouldn't. But if she would! Something's got to be done. I'm getting dippy over it—I'm all to the bad. I've got to know—I've got to—God knows I'd make it up to her—success is in my mind! I've got the ability. I can win, if— *I'll do it!*"

Haideen snatched his hat and left his office. He went straight to Hester Langdon's.

As he stood ringing the bell of the old-fashioned, rambling house on Fordham Heights where Hester lived alone with her uncle, he laughed grimly to himself.

"It's got to be settled—may as well be to-day as next year."

Hester came down-stairs quickly, a

little fluttering at her heart; Haideen had never come before in the morning. She looked at him, anxiously, as she entered the room. Haideen thought he had never seen her so pretty as she was in a simple, blue-cambric house dress with fresh white stock.

"Why, Philip," she smiled, giving him her hands. "Taking a holiday?"

Haideen wrung her hands in a convulsive grip, and then, striding over to the fireplace, he faced her resolutely.

"There's something I want to say, Hester. It's got to be said to-day—now. I love you, you know that. That day in the Park—you guessed it then, didn't you? I've loved you ever since the first time I saw you—they say it takes a chap that way sometimes. Once, I made a sort of resolve never to tell you about it until I could ask you to marry me and I could offer you a home, but I couldn't keep it. Then, you know, I entered the library competition. I think we both know what the winning of that will mean to me. It's got to be a sort of an obsession with me, the idea of winning, and yet, when I try to make the plans, I can't work. I—I can't do anything but think of you and want to be with you, Hester. Your face keeps getting between me and the drawing-board till I'm fairly crazy to see the real you, and, and—I have to give up work and come where you are.

"And, there's no use denying it, Hester, the plans are pretty bad. You've often said you wished you could help me. Dear, you can. If I knew once that you were mine, really mine, and not any other fellow's—were—were my wife, Hester, I believe, I know, I could win anything on earth. Little girl, you're the whole world to me!"

Haideen paused, irresolutely, his thin, eager face full of pleading.

Hester put her hands in his.

"Phil, dear, of course I love you. Let me help, dear boy."

Her eyes were wet with tears.

"Dearest, I want you to marry me at once—right away—this week! Lit-

tle woman, could—could you do me that—make that sacrifice?"

Hester gasped.

"Why, Phil—why—" She paused in sudden frightened embarrassment at the idea.

"My—my clothes, Phil—uncle—everything—I couldn't!" She tried, tremulously, to take it lightly. "You want to marry me to get me off your mind!" she accused him. But the romance of the idea had taken hold of her. It would be almost an elopement—with no family unpleasantness to follow. Her uncle never objected to anything. But in three days! "Twenty-three is young," she said, faintly.

Haideen's face fell. "I know it, Hester, I know it's a selfish thing to ask. I'm a brute, but——"

Hester smiled at him, trustingly. She was all on his side at once.

"I would be helping?" she asked.

For answer he held her close in his arms, and his eyes filled with quick tears.

"I'll do it, Phil," she whispered.

IV

THEY were married the following Saturday, and spent the next day bringing a degree of order into the tiny apartment they had taken. By nine o'clock Monday morning, Haideen was at work. An hour later, he knew that the bitterest part of his struggle was over. He was working whole-souledly, with a splendid freedom—all his old fervor illumined by a new buoyancy. In the freshness of his insight, half the work of the past few weeks was thrown away. He saw now, as though by revelation, what his plan could be, and struck out boldly for it, with three weeks to accomplish the delicate, intricate conception. The inspiration had come, and he worked like one possessed, not lifting his head until darkness reminded him that he had eaten no luncheon. He straightened out his aching muscles with a laugh. His troubles

were over. Now he had only to work.

Hester's turn came now, and she learned the price of her sacrifice. The office was too far distant for Haideen to come home to meals while he was working nights, so Hester joined him down-town for dinner, and then went home alone. He came at midnight or later, fagged and silent.

She spent the first few days covering cushions and putting up curtains and buying what was absolutely necessary out of the six hundred dollars Haideen had borrowed. After these occupations were gone, she went about removing invisible dust that the little maid-servant had already removed, and tried to take enthusiastically to experiments on the gas-range. When she found herself drifting from room to room for no purpose but to stare vacantly out of their windows, she sternly took down her German books and tried to study; but the page was seldom turned. No one came to see her, of course—a person is not supposed to want visitors the first week of married life; and a sort of pride kept her from going to see any one. Others might not understand how beautiful it all was, how wonderful to help. And she was helping. That thought could bring back the brightness to her eyes even in the longest hours. She was always radiant when she joined Haideen down-town.

The second week was harder, for she had less to do, and was in no mood to go on independently with her own life. Haideen worked remorselessly, day and night, and, in spite of herself, an aggrieved note crept into her thoughts. This was not love as the novels had pictured it! Of course, he must work—she understood that; but he might be a little less absorbed, a little more appreciative, when he came home to her. She felt shut out in the cold, and brooded over it in the long, lonely afternoons.

Saturday, life put on a new color, for Haideen was to come home at dinner-time. She was to have him to herself for the whole evening. Never did

a simple programme take so much preparing. Hester was at it by nine in the morning, singing upliftedly. With Jenny's help, the dinner was prepared, the house set in order, an open fire made ready in the grate; a full hour was given to her own toilette. She was ready barely in time.

Haideen came in pale and tired, but full of a new serenity. He had shrunk from talking of his work these two weeks, and now she questioned him only with a half-timid:

"Well?"

"Hester," he answered, laying his hands on her shoulders with a certain solemnity, "since you married me I have done the best work of my whole life—or of Garrett's whole life, or of Lidell's! At this moment, I am the greatest living architect. You wait!"

"Oh, how beautiful!" she sighed. "I knew it, anyway. And I am the greatest living cook," she added. "You wait!"

To her, dinner was but a prelude to the joy of this whole perfect evening together. She had a thousand things to talk about, things that had been gathering all the week, but she saved them jealously till they should be settled down in lovely domestic intimacy. While she was attending to her precious cut-glass with her own hands, she sent Haideen to see to the fire and pull out the couch. It was fifteen minutes before she followed him, and, at the door, she stopped short with a stifled laugh, then entered on tiptoe. The couch was drawn up by the fire, and on it lay Haideen, fast asleep.

"My poor, tired man!" she murmured, sitting down by the hearth to wait till he should have had his nap out. Half an hour went by, then an hour, but he still slept. Hester looked toward him wistfully, and once or twice rose and stood beside him; but he looked so tired, she could not waken him, and went back, dejectedly, to her solitary seat. Half-past nine—the long evening they had planned together was nearly gone! Two tears slipped down her cheeks, but she

closed her eyes and breathed sternly till those that would have followed them were vanquished. Ten o'clock struck. It was too hard—the one evening he had set aside for her! She had been singing about it all day, and it meant so little to him that he could waste it sleeping! She took a book and seated herself by the lamp, her head held very proudly. Even when she heard Haideen start and look about, she did not lift her eyes.

"Why, I have been asleep!" he informed her.

Hester said nothing, and turned a page. One sympathetic word for her disappointment would have softened her at once, but Haideen, still half dazed, did not realize the situation. He stretched, sighed, and suppressed a yawn.

"Whew, I'm tired!" he exclaimed, dropping his forehead into his hands. "Is it bed-time?"

"Half-past ten," she answered, indifferently. "You'd better go—I want to finish my book."

He turned sharply about.

"What is the matter, Hester?"

He did not even understand! She threw down her book and rose from her chair.

"Oh, nothing!" she exclaimed, impetuously. "Only, I have been all alone for two weeks, and I had rather counted on this evening—that is all. It really meant something to me."

Haideen tried to answer patiently and reasonably—the worst course he could have taken. Hester was hurt beyond reasonableness, and a host of injured thoughts that she had been fighting all the week came rushing back, suddenly justified.

"If I had known that it would be like this——"

When she came to that, she knew she had gone too far, but the struggle had been gathering, and it had to come.

Haideen, strained and overtired, kept wilfully to his high ground of logic, and showed his pain only by an increased reasonableness.

"I have realized how hard it was for you all along," he said, temperately,

"but I thought—well, never mind that. I must work every moment this next week. The question is, how am I going to make it less dismal for you?"

Poor little Hester! If he had come to her, and taken her hands in his, and told her again he loved her; if he had known that it is a woman's way to suffer gladly great things, but that she cannot bear the silent struggle, the suppression of all emotion until the crucial period be past—if Haideen had known this—but he did not.

He had lived too long in a world of men where the one who falters is not taken by the hand and held to the path, where weakness is the signal of defeat, where the ranks close quickly when one falls. It is possible that, in his relations with women, no more precarious moment occurs in a man's life than this which confronted Haideen. He glanced at Hester half-curiously, half-impatiently.

"Well?" he added.

She turned from him with ill-concealed resentment.

"Don't, I beg," she said, in a false voice, "mind me in the least. I dare say I can get on—alone."

His irritation was rapidly getting the better of him.

"Alone! What do you mean?"

She had meant nothing. But his words stimulated her pique.

"You have no time, of course, for me—now we are married. Before that you seemed— Oh, well, we're getting to be quite traditionally married, aren't we?" she laughed, bitterly.

Haideen flung himself back on the divan in silence. Against her will, in the strange perversity that assails a tired and nervous brain, Hester kept on talking. What she said did not vex him so much as the tones of her voice, which, to his racking brain, took on a dull monotony.

This was his dream of home-happiness, was it? This was the girl who was to be his comfort, his ideal of stanch comradeship and superb confidence, his understanding, tender wife! He might have known how it would end. Suddenly, he caught a

sentence of hers uttered in that airy, bland tone which can do more to influence a temper than can a curse, "—made a mistake, perhaps. They tell me most people do, and after they're married they—"

"Good God!" he burst out. "Mistake—mistake! You make me think so! You make me wish— Well, it's done now."

His eyes sparkled, angrily. The long days of indoor toil, the lack of sleep and exercise, the deep anxiety over his marriage, and the competition had done their work.

Hester shrank from him, fearfully.

"Don't talk of mistakes! You don't know, you haven't seen, how I am working, how I need every moment of rest and quiet to keep my brain in trim. You couldn't guess it was for you—no, I oughtn't to have expected that a girl would know. And yet you talk airily of mistakes! What's your anxiety to mine? What's your little trouble to the big issues that are going to make or break me—and you? Don't cry—that won't help any now. For God's sake, let me alone, don't speak to me till this contest is over, and then—we'll fix up a way—do something—I don't care what—but in the name of all that's decent—*let me alone!*"

Haideen was too unstrung to watch the effect of his words. Without a look at his wife, he strode grimly into his room and slammed the door.

With a white face and with that bitter hunger of heart and pain of spirit of a girl whose experience has never brought her face to face with the desperate anger of one she loves, Hester sat cold and still in the tiny apartment.

Hers were the bewilderment and hurt womanhood which have lost the power of analysis. Her emotions were numb from the blow. Protestations, anger, forgiveness, retaliation were beyond her. She shivered miserably. Presently, so strong is the force of our habit in any crisis, she rose and crept into her room, and toward morning fell into a sort of stupor from which she

did not awaken until late. When she came out, Haideen, who took no Sunday at present, had already gone to his office. She looked helplessly about, but there was no message from him.

"Very well, then!" she said to herself, her heart hardening again.

Phil's pipe lay in her work-basket; Phil's architectural magazines littered the table; Phil's cigarette ashes were in dull-gray heaps in the grate. Everything seemed to be Phil's. The sight hurt her. She felt terribly lonely and quite out of his life. The scenes of the previous night returned to her, but they were unreal and clouded. She was too apathetic to think, or to care, strongly. Only one thing was in her mind—to get away. He wanted it. She wanted it, too.

"I'll go home to uncle," she sighed.

After a desultory attempt to set the rooms to rights, she gave it up, and putting a few articles in a hand-bag, she dragged herself away without a backward look.

V

THE outdoor air put life in her. As she walked on, she recovered her poise, and her resentment grew keen toward her husband. Her uncle was childishly pleased to see her, and not in the least surprised. Her vague explanation seemed to him perfectly satisfactory. Hester spent a most wretched day, talking brightly about her experiences as a housekeeper, playing on the disused piano, and seeking domestic wisdom with vivid intelligence from her Aunt Lucia, a keen-eyed, vigorous woman who had taken Hester's place in the household. She had never known this aunt very well, and she quailed a little now under the honest, searching look that she once or twice encountered. It forced her to double her defensive gaiety.

"And you are going to stay overnight?" Aunt Lucia asked, abruptly, in the middle of her cheerfulness.

"Yes, if uncle will let me," answered Hester, brightly; and then she

went back to the piano, where she could cry unnoticed.

Dinner-time nearly broke her down, with the thought of Haideen going out for his solitary meal. Then she remembered that he had let her come away, and she set her trembling lips, and swallowed the food that was dust and ashes in her mouth.

Later in the evening, Aunt Lucia came and sat beside her while her uncle dozed. The kind, strong presence was subtly comforting. She let her head drop back on the older woman's shoulder with an unconscious sigh.

"You must have had a great deal to bear, Hester, with this competition on hand," her aunt said, after a pause. "I know how a man is swallowed up by his work sometimes—and how hard it is for a woman to understand it."

Hester said nothing, and presently she went on, as though musingly:

"It is wonderful what one can bear, when one cares enough! It is this power of cheerful enduring that makes women do very heroic things, sometimes. Do you remember your great-aunt Cordelia—my mother?"

"Very faintly," said Hester, glad to change the subject.

"The last year of her life, she told me something—it gives one an idea what a woman can rise to. I don't think she would have minded my telling you. When she had been married about ten years, her health broke down, and she was practically an invalid for a long time. Then she went away for six months and took treatment, so that in the Spring she came back a well woman. She said that, when my father met her at the station, she knew in two minutes that there was something wrong. He was very cheerful, very kind, very glad to see her, yet, under everything, she felt trouble. And very soon she saw what it was. She had a cousin, Minnie DeWitt, a beautiful girl, perfectly unscrupulous when she wanted amusement. And she had wanted it that Winter. As a result, she had simply dazzled my father. He

was in love with her. He was fighting it desperately, and hiding it with every bit of power he possessed. Yet, in three days, my mother had seen it, and, on the morning of the fourth, she came across some little token—something that had belonged to Minnie—among her husband's things that forced her to believe and face it."

"Oh, how dreadful!" exclaimed Hester. "What did she do?"

"Of course, her first impulse was to do everything an injured wife usually does. She would accuse him, renounce him; she was ready for a big scene. And then, suddenly, in the middle of her anger, she saw it from his side—his fight to kill the feeling, his bitter shame over it, his desperate effort to spare her the pain of seeing it. And she said that, all at once, she was overwhelmingly sorry for him, so sorry that she cried far more bitterly than she could ever have cried for herself. Then she sat down and faced the situation. She knew that, if she gave him up, there could be no happiness for him with Minnie; so, clearly, the only way was to help him get over it."

"Oh, how could she!" murmured Hester.

"She was a big woman, my dear. Well, she realized that she could not go about cheerfully with this in her mind, and so her first act was to put it out of her mind. She said that it was like pushing some one out of the room and holding the door shut by main strength—that for weeks she never lost the feeling of clinging desperately to a door that some one was trying, even more desperately, to open.

"But she kept it shut, and, mind you, she was now a well woman. She wore pretty clothes, and had pleasant people at the house—and Minnie very often, clever woman! For, in spite of the girl's beauty, she seemed cheap and silly beside a woman like my mother. My father always found her sweet and strong and serene, and very soon she saw her old power over him coming back. She had kept the door shut so faithfully that all the bitterness was gone. She said that when it was over

she simply felt as though she had nursed him through a serious illness. He stood watching her one day for some minutes, and then he came over and took her in his arms. 'Let's go away somewhere together, just us two!' he said; and she knew she had won. And she never told him that she had seen and understood."

"Oh, I couldn't have done it!" whispered Hester, after a long pause.

"Yes, you could, my dear, if you cared enough. A big love can bear anything.

"You poor child!" Aunt Lucia added, under her breath, for Hester had suddenly buried her face in her hands. "If you're homesick and want to go home to-night, my dear," she said, quietly, rising to look at the clock, "you needn't waken your uncle. I will explain to him."

Hester kissed her silently, and slipped out of the room.

There was a light in the little drawing-room when she softly pushed open the door. Under the lamp lay a sheet of letter-paper. Hester saw, "Dearest and Best," written across it as she stole past. Haideen was stretched on the couch, one arm hanging over its edge, his thin, tired face sharply outlined against a dark pillow as he slept. Hester dropped down on the floor beside him and, laying her cheek against his arm, waited till he should waken and find her there.

VI

SATURDAY night, at the last possible moment, Haideen handed in his drawings. Experts were coming from different cities to judge them, and the verdict was expected at the end of the following week.

"If I win, we will have a historic wedding-trip," he promised her. "We will go down to the Springs for a month and ride and drive and do everything you like best."

"And if you lose," she suggested—"of course, you won't, but if—couldn't we have a little wedding-trip anyway, to Jersey City, or somewhere?"

"Yes, I think we could manage Jersey City," he admitted, gravely.

Friday night they dined down-town in somewhat tremulous gaiety. They were carrying out their determination to eat, drink and be merry with some success when Garrett bore down on them, flinging a familiar hand on Haideen's reluctant shoulder.

"Me deadly rival," he laughed.

"Mrs. Haideen, which of us do you back?"

"The better man," said Hester, with critical eyebrows.

Garrett laughed again.

"Very good! Oh, well, you can't tell in these things," he said. "Morris may get it, or you, or I, or even one of the others. Nothing is sure till we get our notices. Hope for the best!"

And he went on his loud-voiced way, leaving them staring dejectedly at their plates.

"Hateful, boasting person!" murmured Hester.

"Yes, but he has a right to boast,"

Haideen protested with a sigh.

Presently, they decided that they did not want any dessert, and went sadly home. Haideen read aloud persistently the rest of the evening, and neither knew a word of what was read, though Hester never saw the book afterward without a dreadful memory of sick, dismayed suspense.

In the morning, they breakfasted in determined cheerfulness, with no men-

tion of architecture, and then Hester announced that she had errands to do down-town.

"I may as well go down with you," she said, casually, not meeting his eyes.

"Suppose you do," Haideen agreed.

They looked over the morning papers on the elevated train, and exchanged items of interest. They even tried to disagree over politics, but Hester found her jaw trembling, and had to let herself be argued down.

"I will come up to the office with you," she said, as they left the train, and tried bravely to keep the conversation going. But it was too hard. They entered the building in pale silence.

Haideen turned over his letters, one after another, and then his hand paused, suddenly.

Hester leaned against the table and waited, with icy fingers and strained throat, while he slit open the envelope and unfolded the type-written sheet. Her eyes clung to his face, but, for an interminable minute, it told nothing.

Then she saw the color flood back to it with sudden radiance. He laughed and held out his arms to her, letting the sheet fall to the ground.

"Then it isn't Jersey City?" she sobbed against his coat.

"It isn't Jersey City!" he whispered.



EQUIVOCAL

SHE—Constance is far too good for him.

HE—Oh, well, it won't last long. She is marrying him to reform him.



A SHORT CUT

MAY BONDCLIPPER—Tell me the quickest way to Jack's heart.

GRACE CANDOR—Through your pocket-book.

THE DREAM HARBOR

WINDS of the South, from the sunny beaches
Under the headland, call to me;
And I am sick for the purple reaches,
Olive-fringed by an idle sea,

Where low waves of the South are calling
Out of the silent sapphire bay,
And slow tides are rising, falling,
Under the cliffs where the ripples play.

Odors of vineyard and grove come thronging
In through my casement open wide;
And I would follow the dull, sweet longing
Unto the slope of the warm hillside.

And I would sit in the low-hung arbor,
Letting the hours go drifting by,
Watching the boats in the little harbor,
Watching the changeless purple sky.

And I would think of the happy chorus
Sung by men in the ancient days,
When they could say: "There is life before us,"
Love, and dreams, which the gods may praise.

"And let each, as his brightest duty,
Seek for the dream that shall be most sweet,
Weaving it into a song of beauty,
Lifting it up to the high gods' feet."

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE.



LIKELY TO REMAIN UNSOLVED

ETHEL—Was it his money that made a fool of him, or did Nature get the start of it?

RUTH—That will ever remain a mystery. He was born wealthy.



IT is not surprising that truth lies at the bottom of a well. It has always had cold water thrown on it.

IN NEWER JOYS

IN newer joys than those we used to know,
 We spend our days, and find them goodly so;
 As other folk forget, we, too, forget—
 The moment claims us, like a gay Pierrette
 Who sings her song, and laughs, and turns to go.

The world goes fast—new lover, friend and foe,
 Claim each their turn, for each the scene is set;
 Yesterday's play—is that remembered yet
 In newer joys?

We dance and drift like leaves the four winds blow;
 Our laughter is so quick, our tears so slow;
 So much we mock, so little we regret!
 See, now, I laugh, although my eyes are wet,
 At that poor love we buried long ago
 In newer joys.

JOHN WINWOOD.



SHE HADN'T THE HEART TO

LAURA—Cholly doesn't know it all.
 ALICE—No; but it would be a pity to undeceive him.



HEARD AT NIGHT

FIRST NIGHT-WATCHMAN—You look badly. What's the matter?
 SECOND NIGHT-WATCHMAN—I'm troubled with insomnia.



THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE

THE PLAYWRIGHT—Yes, sir, I put a great deal of thought into that play.
 THE CRITIC—Whose?

THE LAST GIFT

By Theodosia Garrison

ALL the bad fairy-godmothers had come to the christening because the child was a girl-child, and they had held a grudge against one of her grandmothers, Eve by name, that they repaid little by little to each woman of her race.

The baby lay asleep in her cradle, and the nurse drowsed in a chair beside her, and heard and saw nothing, though, had she been awake, she would only have thought that the firelight threw strange, wavering shadows about the room.

The oldest godmother spoke first, chuckling above her staff, as she hobbled to the cradle and leaned above the sleeping child.

"Take you my gift," she said, "for I gave a like one to your mother before you. I give you envy for those things you shall lack, ever and always. You shall crave beauty and never, even in your own eyes, be beautiful. You shall desire wit and know that your tongue falters on the word. With the things you possess, you will never be content, craving those you desire. I give you envy!"

She touched the child on the heart, and stumbled back into the shadows, and another took her place.

"Girl-child," she mumbled, "I give you fear—the little fine fears that prick at the heart. You shall distrust fate and your lovers and yourself, and never be confident. You will believe with your eyes, your lips, but never with your heart."

And she too faded into the shadows, and another stood beside the child, and laid withered fingers on her head.

"I give you sense of duty for task-

mistress," she said. "And it shall keep its fingers on your wrist forever, and stand between the lovely things of life and yourself like a black wall, and it shall whip your pagan soul into submission when you rebel. I give you duty, girl-child!"

"And I," said the one who took her place, "give you the anguish of too much loving. You shall love deeply where you are loved lightly, strongly where you are loved weakly. You will know the sting of the careless smile and the anguish of the missed kiss, and the cruelty of the beloved to the unloved. For this gift was your mother's and your mother's mother before her."

And the child stirred and cried sharply in its sleep, and the nurse started and slept again, for the room was still.

And another crept out of the shadows, and still another, and each chuckled as she bestowed her gift. But the last said nothing, but turned with the others to see the unbidden guest who stood upon the threshold.

The oldest godmother grinned. "You have come too late," she said. "You good fairies have a way of being belated at times, and we have given our gifts. What can you do now?"

The good fairy-godmother shook her head, sadly.

"Not much," she said. "What gifts have you given her?" They pointed to their gifts triumphantly. "It is too late," they said. "These things are given, and you cannot destroy them, not one."

The good fairy looked, and frowned, and considered a moment. Then she went to the cradle and kissed the baby lightly on the forehead.

"Oh, you poor little soul," she said. "I can't take one away, but I can give you something, too, and it will be such a gift that you can bear these miserable things without being too unhappy. I give you something that will take the sting from life, that will lead you over the rough places and be a light in dark ones. No woman that possesses this can suffer too much, and no woman can love beyond heartbreak who carries such a talisman in her breast. I give you something that tears the mask from tragedy and shows the farce, that makes duty companionable and takes the edge from grief. I give you the great mitigator and compensator, and it should console you to know that very, very few women possess it."

And she kissed the baby lightly, and

laughed in the infuriated faces of the wicked godmothers.

"After all, your gifts are practically harmless now," she said, and vanished in the first ray of the morning sunshine, and, in a moment, the shadows had disappeared and the room was empty.

The baby woke, and yawned, and looked at her nurse.

"I am very hungry," she thought, "and I suppose if I howled I might be fed. But, after all, how absurd it is that I should wake up first." And she blinked her eyes and gurgled enjoyingly to herself over her thumbs.

For the gift the good fairy-godmother had bestowed had been a practical and philosophical sense of humor.



TWO LOVES

ONE was a child's romance,
 A girl's bewildering dream,
 Woven of fire and dew
 And moonlight's silver gleam;
 Of the fragrance of the rose,
 The glory of the stars,
 The flash of sparkling waters,
 The sunset's golden bars!
 A thing of smiles and blushes,
 Quick thrills and throbbing heart,
 A strange, mysterious glamour
 That bade the tear-drops start.

One was a woman's love,
 Woven of many strands,
 Richer than braided gold,
 Stronger than iron bands;
 A love that holier grew
 Through all the changeeful years,
 That clasped close hands with joy,
 Yet wavered not for tears.
 A love that loved through all things,
 Through sorrow, pain and death—
 Through all the bliss and all the bane
 To which life answereth!

JULIA C. R. DORR.

IMOGEN'S HOST

By Anne O'Hagan

PROLOGUE

27508 MONROE STREET,
TOLEDO, O.

MY DEAREST POLLY: Whether it will surprise you or not, I cannot guess, but my engagement is broken. I cannot write about it, even to you. Albert is all that is kind and forbearing, and visits me with no reproaches for the miserable five years of caprice through which I have put him. I am ashamed and remorseful, but—oh, Polly, I am so glad! I could dance along the streets because I don't need to marry any one! It's like waking out of a nightmare. I am rid of that smothering sense of responsibility—you know what I mean, I am not one of those fortunate women who were meant for marriage, I am sure. For no one could be more worthy of love and devotion than Albert, and indeed I do esteem him, and I am endlessly fond of him. But marry him! How could I have thought that I should ever be able to do that? And if not him, whom I have known all my life, who has never been harsh with my whims, who is goodness and gentleness personified, then assuredly no one! I wish I were the other sort of woman, but I'm not. And I'm glad I found it out in something like time!

There are horrid details, of course. Toledo is not a large place, as you may recall. And the circle in which poor Albert and I move is a limited one, and there are bound to be awkward meetings. So I'm off to Italy for the Winter. When I come home, I hope he'll be engaged again—he's bound to

be; he's doomed to matrimony and domesticity—simply doomed!

Well, en route, I shall arrive in New York next Saturday morning, sailing thence the following Wednesday. I am going to stay at the Hudson, which they tell me is a quiet hostelry adapted to the lone spinster on her travels. I shall expect to hear from you there. Do you realize that we haven't met since the Summer before your marriage, four years ago?

Dear old Polly, I am so glad to think of seeing you again!

Always your devoted,

IMOGEN FARING.

November the fifteenth.

Mrs. James Leigh Whitford, Wuthering Heights, New Jersey.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS, N. J.

MY DEAREST IMOGEN:

Thank goodness that engagement of yours is broken! I don't want to be heartless, but you were no more suited to each other than—I don't know what. But I haven't time to talk about it. Jim's mother is packing to go, and I must hurry to help her. She's been making us a visit. You are to come to us Saturday afternoon in time for dinner. We won't hear of anything else. You are to stay with us until Tuesday, anyway—you can't have shopping and things to do when you are going abroad. I'll enclose a time-card with the good trains marked, but they're all good; we're only forty-five minutes from New York. By the way, no suburbanite is ever more than that. I'll come in town to meet you, if I can. Anyway, I'll call you up—no, we won't make any plan

that could possibly keep you waiting to hear from me when you might want to be at the steamship office. You'll come on the six-thirteen from Christopher street! No backing out, now!

It's all stuff and nonsense about your not marrying. You only feel that way because you weren't in love with Albert—my dear, you couldn't be! Of course, he's a saint and all that, but—well, you aren't, and it must have been a frightful strain trying to live up to your conception of your duty in the matter.

Till Saturday then! Jim sends his love. He's so glad you're coming, and, of course, I am, dearest Imogen.

Your loving,
POLLY.

November the eighteenth.

Miss Imogen Faring, Hotel Hudson, Gramercy Park, New York City.

P. S.—Opened this to put in the time-card which I forgot before.

P. S.—Opened it again to say that I'd never, never forgive you if you didn't come. Six-thirteen from the New York side.

Office of the Hotel Hudson; two-twenty-five P.M., Saturday afternoon, November the twenty-first.

"Hello. Yes'm, this is the Hudson. Missis—please spell the name. F-A-R-I—Oh, Miss Faring. Please hold the wire a minute.—Say, Charlie, see is Miss Faring, Toledo party that came about noon, in. No?—Hello! No'm, Miss Faring ain't in. Yes'm. Please hold the wire a minute—Charlie, gimme a pencil—Hello! Now I can take the message. 'Mrs.'—what's the name? Please spell it. W-H-I-T-F-O-R-D. 'Mrs. Whitford wishes Miss Faring to meet her and Mr. Whitford at the Martin for dinner at seven'—a quarter before seven?—'to go to the theatre afterward. They will take the twelve-five train out, so will Miss Faring please send her bag to the Christopher street station? Mrs. Whitford will explain change of plan to Miss Faring when they meet. If Miss Faring is too tired to go to the theatre, will she please meet the party

at the twelve-five'—what's that? You'll call for her for the twelve-five? All right, ma'am. Read it over to you, ma'am?

"That right, ma'am? Oh, sure, ma'am! She'll get it. Good-bye!"

Office of the Hotel Hudson, five-five P.M., Saturday, November the twenty-first.

"Any messages for you, ma'am? What name, please? Faring? No, Miss Faring, nothing but a package from Stern's, collect two dollars and thirty-five cents. All right, Miss Faring. Hansom or coupé? Hansom? Have it here by a quarter of six, Miss Faring."

I

THERE were two carriages waiting at the little station when Imogen stepped from the train. One was obviously a private equipage, and toward it she looked with expectancy until she saw it pre-empted by the man with gray Dundrearys who had read the financial supplement of the *Post* all the way out. By that time, the other vehicle had been engaged by the parcel-laden woman who had strewn the train floor with bundles during her progress toward the door. Imogen looked rather blankly about her.

"How funny of the Whitfords!" she said to herself.

The little group of men and women deposited by the train scattered in the silvery whiteness of the frosty Autumn evening. Imogen went into the station.

"I beg your pardon," she said to the ticket-agent, who was apparently closing the office for the night, "but—I expected some one from Mrs. Whitford's to meet me. Can you tell me how to reach her house?"

"Cross the tracks and take the left-hand street up the hill," replied the functionary, locking the ticket-closet behind him. "It's next to the last house on the street—right-hand side. You can't miss it. White colonial,

and sure to be lit up—it always is of an evening.”

“Is it far?”

“Six and a half minutes,” was the finely accurate and satisfactory rejoinder.

Imogen's heart lightened, for she did not know that no dwelling in a suburb is ever allowed to be more than seven minutes from the station by suburban calculation. She seized her suit-case, cheerfully. Heavy as it was, she could carry it so short a distance without discomfort.

“It's funny of the Whitfords,” she said to herself, with some asperity, when she had toiled up the long slope of the street. Already she had walked ten minutes, shifting the heavy bag once or twice. Now she put it down and panted. Although she had reached the top of the hill, the road still stretched far before her. The mellow lights of comfortable houses, set back among bare trees, glowed alluringly. But the white colonial house of brilliantly lighted aspect seemed still remote.

“If this isn't exactly like Polly Brown!” sputtered Imogen, indignantly. “To insist upon my spending Sunday in this forsaken suburb, and then forgetting all about it! I wonder if the Whitford person whom she married is as bad as she is, or if she even forgot to mention to him that I'm coming.”

She took up her bag and trudged on again. The boundary road finally came into view. The next to the last house on the right-hand side of the street loomed large and white in the shivering moonlight. Not a light glowed in any window, except where the cold brightness of the moon concentrated on a broad pane and intensified the chill, inhospitable look of the place. Imogen's anger gave place to dismay.

She walked up the curving driveway, mounted the shallow flight of steps that led to the piazza, and rang the bell. It seemed to her that the desolate reverberations of its peal sounded endlessly through the house.

So it was with the succeeding rings—the second, third and fourth.

Imogen was cold. She was hungry; she was tired. Her arms ached from lugging the heavy bag. She would have been furiously angry but for her fright. Something had happened to the Whitfords, that was sure! They had been called home—some one had died. But the servants—surely Polly had once written exuberantly that her poverty was made bearable by an angel cook, a duck of a waitress and a perfect lamb of a man-servant!

When Imogen had pressed the electric button and banged the brass knocker vainly for ten minutes, she looked about her, helplessly. She recalled the locking of the station. She recalled her airy discarding of the time-table when she had once achieved the six-thirteen. She shivered at the thought of the long walk and the pneumonia-inviting wait on the station bench, for—who could tell how long?

Well, a young woman who is about to tour Europe alone should not be overcome by a small suburban difficulty like this one. Imogen beat her hands against her sides to warm them; she descended from the piazza to the graveled walk and reconnoitered for a safe hiding-place for her valise. She shoved it under the steps, and then she crossed the frozen lawn separating the Whitfords' house from their neighbors'—a Queen Anne structure whose stone and weathered wood shone with one or two ruddy, hospitable-looking apertures.

There was a long and disconcerting pause before her ringing of the doorbell was answered. She had begun to think herself in a village of evil enchantment where doors never opened, servants never appeared at summons, hosts and hostesses slept on in a magic sleep, forgetful of guests. She had, too, the impression that she was watched while she stood tapping cold and impatient feet upon the piazza flooring. She looked nervously and irritably over her shoulder; she darted a suspicious glance up toward

the overhanging window of a turret. But she saw no lurking figure, caught the gleam of no sly, inquisitive eye to justify her dread.

Then, suddenly, noiselessly, the door swung back and, beyond a vestibule, a big hall glowed warm before her—a fire leaping in its stone chimney, rugs spread warmly on its polished floor, an inviting chair drawn between the fire and the big, lamp-lighted, book-cluttered table. Imogen could scarcely restrain herself from pushing by the man who stood between her and warmth and comfort. For a second, she forgot to make her explanations. Then she blurted out her questions and her apologies, tactlessly. At their conclusion, the man still hesitated, blocking the way. Imogen frowned at him.

She could not decide whether he was a member of the family or a servant. His garments were not badges of his station, and his face was nondescript. His hesitation to help Imogen was that of an uncertain hiring, but that was the only distinctively menial mark about him. Finally, he opened the door a few grudging inches.

"Won't you come in?" he said, with something foreign in his laborious English. "It is impossible for me to conjecture as to the whereabouts of the Whitford household beyond hazarding a guess that the servants have gone to the ball at Wuthering Castle. Mrs. Wuthering's servants are the hosts at such a festivity once a year, and all those in menial employ in the neighborhood are invited. Most of the employers, therefore, dine in town that night. The—the ladies of this household do; they are also from home to-night, I am regretful to inform you. Otherwise, they would have been charmed to entertain you until the arrival of their neighbor and your friend. As it is, if you will sit down and warm yourself, I will procure you some refreshment. If you will remain here until Mrs. Whitford returns, I think I can make you comfortable. There is undoubtedly some perfectly simple explanation of this awkward contretemps."

The contrast between the amazingly

sonorous diction of the man and the monotonous quality of his voice, puzzled Imogen. But she dismissed problems. To sink into the Morris chair, to put her feet toward the fender, to eat and drink—these were enough. And whether these privileges were offered her by a servant or his employer, she did not care.

"Mrs. Whitford," she said, smiling brilliantly upon him, "will be grateful to you. And I am—very."

"It is nothing," answered he.

He departed through the portières at the right of the hall, and, in a few minutes, Imogen heard the cheerful clatter of plates and forks. Very swiftly he was back with a tray spread with professional neatness. He must be a servant! Whatever he was, the thin-sliced ham and mutton, the bread, the sweet butter, the small bottle of claret, all appealed enormously to Imogen. She had made a late breakfast on the train in the morning, and had neglected luncheon and tea in the hurry of her business. Now she found herself ravenous.

"I am starving," she confessed. "I should have died if I had had to go back to New York dinnerless. But thanks to your hospitality——"

She paused to give him an opportunity to declare himself master or man. But he merely took advantage of the pause to say:

"Now, if you please, I must return to an undertaking upon which I had just entered at the time of your arrival. You will find reading-matter here. The evening trains from New York arrive at eleven and twelve-fifty. Mrs. Whitford will surely be on one of them. And so, also, will Mrs. Leech."

He withdrew, swiftly and noiselessly, before Imogen had a chance to inquire whether it was Mrs. Leech's house in which she was. She did not greatly care as she turned to her food. Never had bread and meat seemed to her so delicious, never condiments so appetizing, never wine so warming and penetrating! Delight in physical comfort flowed through her veins.

The sense of slight adventure also pleased her. She could hear herself telling the story of this night with great effect later. How shocked the correct Albert would be over such an awkwardness, how grieved over her position—alone in a strange house, in a strange town, with one mysterious man moving queerly about it!

And, as for her, she liked it all. It was adventure of a mild sort. It was also comfort after the long railroad trip and the hurried errands of the day. Comfort, warmth, food, wine—she was growing drowsy. She must not fall asleep. She must read. She reached vaguely toward the table with her hand, but it wavered and fell back upon the arm of her chair. A sigh fluttered from her lips, her dark head bent sidewise toward her shoulder, her white eyelids—very white against the thick blackness of the lashes that fringed them—trembled for a second above her eyes. Then they covered those blue wells of light. Imogen slept.

II

It was a single stroke of a silvery-toned clock that woke her. She had something of a struggle to shake off the heavy languor that weighed her limbs, her chest, her head; it was like the effort to overcome a breathless nightmare, this attempt to rouse herself. And there was something of the menacing quality of nightmare in the slumber from which she tried to recover. Before she managed to open her heavy eyes, to move her hands, before she was conscious of her whereabouts or condition, the knowledge that safety lay only in ridding herself of her burden of sleep was strong in her. Finally she succeeded. A long-drawn, quivering sigh announced her return to consciousness. Consciousness was followed by a sudden appreciation of her position. She pushed her toque—a foolish conglomeration of velvet, violets and moleskin that somehow achieved the impossible and looked becoming as well as smart—

back from her eyes, over which it had fallen.

"I hope that you are quite rested, madam."

Imogen half started to her feet, and then leaned back. A man sat opposite her—a very different person from her entertainer of—how many hours ago?

There was no question as to this one's status. Beneath his corduroy knickerbockers, heavy woolen stockings and great walking boots stuck out prominently. A rough, shabby, unmistakably good Norfolk jacket clothed the upper part of his massive frame, and the pipe which he held in his fingers had been colored by much loving smoking. His eyes, brown and daring above the strong nose, danced upon Imogen. His mouth, ample, strong and kind, smiled beneath a close, rough, dark mustache. In one astonished, alarmed glance, Imogen knew more of his looks than she had ever before known of those of any living man.

"I—who are you?" she faltered. It was not what she should have said, but the leadenness of sleep still bound her mind, though her body had shaken itself free.

"Pardon me if I say that I think that question belongs more properly to me."

Imogen sat straighter, and tried to recall some dignity to her bearing.

"You are not the one who let me in," she averred.

"That is quite true. And you did not let me in, though I had forgotten my keys and hammered on the door for ten minutes. I had to enter by the pantry window. So we are quits there."

"Are you—are you Mr. Leech?"

"My good girl," said the man, impatiently—and the tone and appellation were like a cold shower to Miss Faring—"my good girl, it is your presence, not mine, that needs explanation, though I am afraid the one you will make will not tally with the evidence already in my possession."

"Are you insane?" demanded Imo-

gen, haughtily. "His good girl," indeed! "Evidencel" Undoubtedly he was insane, for all his look of abounding bodily and mental vigor. Insane—that was it! And the other one was his keeper!

"Alienists tell me that we are all a little demented, that none of us could escape a really conscientious commission on lunacy. But beyond such mania as is common to the whole race, I think I may be acquitted. However, my sanity is not the pressing question. What are you doing here? Where are your accomplices?"

Imogen smiled faintly, but ingratiatingly, upon the lunatic. She could see no clock, she did not dare to look at her watch. But, perhaps, Polly Whitford's house was open now! Perhaps, she could make its shelter before this maniac killed her. Meantime, she must humor him somewhat.

"My accomplices?" Her voice was tremulous. "There was only one, and I don't know where he is. He went up the stairs. Perhaps"—she spoke almost wheedlingly to the handsome giant—"perhaps, if you were to go up, you might find him?"

The giant leaned back and laughed. Laughed? Roared! It was a mellow roar, and Imogen had a swift sense of delight in the sound of it, even while she was divided between rage and terror.

"Won't you?" she begged.

Her blue eyes were fixed steadily and pleadingly upon him. She was trying to keep him under control by the power of a concentrated gaze. He stopped laughing and stared back at her, and a curious change came over his expression. Mirth gave way to pity and a sort of fierce disgust.

"Don't be a fool!" he commanded, roughly. "What the devil did you ever take up this sort of thing for? You don't look——"

"I don't care for profanity," Imogen interrupted, forgetting in a crimsoning moment of annoyance that she might be dealing with a lunatic.

He looked at her again with a sort of amazement and admiration.

"You certainly have the cheek of the dev—I beg your ladyship's pardon! You have sublime impudence! You little house-breaker—to object to profanity! Perhaps, I should apologize for smoking in your presence?"

He began to fill his pipe, but did not remove his gaze from Imogen's white face. As for that young woman, anger dominated fright in her heart. She was accustomed to deference from men, to admiration of an almost servile sort; her Albert had spoiled her somewhat, to tell the truth. Her eyes were as blue and as angry as the lightnings in a Summer sky at night. She arose.

"No one," she declared, with icy vehemence, "is insane enough to be allowed such insolence. You may do whatever you please, but I will not submit to this any longer. I shall call for help."

She darted toward the door, but the man was after her.

"Very clever, my dear, very clever," he said, catching her by the shoulder. "But you don't make your escape in any such fashion as this!"

The grasp was like steel. The pain of it made Imogen wince. She struggled to twist herself free of it. But the man led her back to the fire, and deposited her ignominiously in the chair again.

"I have telephoned for the constable," he announced; "and you will not leave until he comes."

"The constable?"

"The constable. Why, my dear girl, do you expect to invade people's houses, rob them of their heirlooms and of even more valuable things—our ancestors were a poor lot—to eat their meat and drink their liquor until you are positively boozed——"

"Oh!" cried Imogen.

The impotent wrath that breathed in the long-drawn monosyllable made the man laugh.

"Good!" he cried. "You should go on the stage! Melodrama has lost something by your preference for burglary! I suppose you are indignant at my mentioning your condition? You object to profanity, you know! But what am

I to think? I come home—unexpectedly I admit, and most ill-bred it was of me—I come home to find a pretty little thief before my fire, sunk in a sleep from which nothing will rouse her for a while; and by her side is a tray, and on the tray an empty wine-bottle. Really, you haven't much of a head if that pint of claret did for you. But what you may have had before, of course, I can only guess."

"You unutterable—creature!"

Imogen had forgotten all about her lunacy theories now. Rage consumed her. If she could have killed the big, sardonic, smiling brute whose every word and look were insults, she would have done so joyously. Murder seemed a little thing to her.

There was something in the tense rage of her face, in the furious pride of her attitude, that gave the man pause. He hesitated in his speech. He looked at her, inquiringly. He put aside his pipe. He grew red and embarrassed.

"Tell me," he began, after a moment's pause, "tell me—" His voice wavered and broke. "If I have made any sort of a mistake," he said, despairingly, "you will never forgive me, never. Mistake? It isn't possible! Your reticule is stuffed full of poor grandmother's trinkets; and there's the bag of silver in the entryway."

Imogen grabbed the gray elephant-skin bag upon the table. It was open, and from it she shook into her lap a quaint assortment of old jewelry—queer, chased-gold brooches, strings of Roman beads, bits of Venetian silver, pins and rings picked out with rose diamonds, a ruby in a dingy setting, some coral earrings. And, seeing these things, she raised piteous, bewildered eyes to her jailer's face. She tried to speak. But her lips shook and she could say nothing. At her horrified, amazed look, a change came over his expression.

"Didn't you—really?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"And now," she said, "perhaps you'll let me explain who I am and why I am here."

The man looked long at her, dis-

trust, embarrassment and a sort of admiration struggling together in his face.

"Go on," he said, finally, "Of course, you may be merely devilish clever—but it can't do any harm to listen. No, by Jove, I don't believe it! I don't believe—anything but what you tell me!"

The haughty Miss Faring had never expected to receive a tribute to her mere honesty with such abject gratitude.

"Oh, thank you for that," she cried, her eyes luminous through sudden tears.

Then she began her story.

"Wait a minute," interrupted the man, when she had reached that point in her narrative where she was admitted to the house. "Looked like an anemic professor out of a job, didn't he?"

Imogen smiled and nodded.

"Um—talked with a repressed German accent and in the most Johnsonian terms?"

"Yes! Do you know who he is?"

"Rather! He was one of mother's pets. A needy count or baron or something she picked up in her town charities. She thought him so uncommonly noble to be willing to act as butler in a simple suburban household while he waited for remittances! That's how he learned the lay of the land and knew the dearth of servants to-night and the unprotected state of the houses. He resigned from the butlership last month because of 'overtures toward a reconciliation from his honored parents'! I told mother he was a humbug, all along. By Jove, he must have been annoyed to hear me striding up the path before he got through with the job. I had walked over to the club for dinner. Of course, he thought I had joined the town brigade—probably saw me put mother on the train. But—to think of your being in his power here! I wonder why he let you in? May have thought you had a right to force an entrance, and that it would be easier to cook up a plausible excuse for being here him-

self, if he let you in, than if you—tried the pantry entrance, for instance—and discovered him. But—how was it you slept so soundly, I wonder?"

He lifted the wine-glass and studied a faint sediment in the bottom. He sniffed suspiciously at the bottle. His face darkened.

"Drugged it!" he exclaimed. "Dastardly trick! Miss Faring, what shall I say to you about the indignities, the outrages, you have suffered in this house? And I——"

The hopeless humility of his attitude, the blank despair of his look, moved Imogen to a dim smile, although she was shaking with a realization of the dangers past.

"Please don't bother with apologies," she begged. "What could you have thought but what you did?"

"I might have used my eyes," he answered, with self-loathing. "I might have looked at you! And if I had——"

Imogen blushed.

"And don't bother with compliments, if you please," she said. "They seem—belated and a little meaningless."

Mr. Leech started a vigorous protest or apology, but it was cut short. A mighty tramping sounded on the piazza, a peremptory ringing of the door-bell followed, and, in another minute, the constable, ruddy, elate, blustered in with a prisoner in tow.

"Evenin', Mr. Leech," he bellowed, jovially. "Guess we've got your man here. Tell you how it was. I was out in Perkins's woods, doin' suthin' in the way of lookin' for that coon the Smead boys say is in them, an' my boy Jim he comes along, beatin' me up. He was out with me the other night, so he knows about where to look for me, an' he says you're a-telephonin' for me to come an' git a thief you've got in your place. Well, I makes tracks for the village, but all of a sudden I see suthin' skulkin' in the shadders an' the bushes. An' havin' my gun, I gives chase, an' I gets him—an' he turns out to be that French markee that worked for you last Summer, takin' French leave of us,

by gum, with a bag of loot from your place! Leastways, it's got your marks on it. Now where's the other fellow?"

"Jim misunderstood me," declared Austen Leech, suavely. "I didn't say I had a robber here, Gilson. I said there had been a robbery here. How are you, Von Blitter?"

Von Blitter turned a cold eye of dislike toward his late employer, and declined to commit himself on the subject of his health. Then, shifting his gaze about the room, he spied Imogen.

"Sleep well?" he inquired, flippantly.

He made instant acquaintance with the force of Austen Leech's right hand.

"Another word from you, and you'll go to the hospital for repairs before you go to jail!" declared the young man.

Then, while Gilson's prowess was being suitably recognized at the sideboard, there came the tap of light steps, the flurry of skirts, the panting of an agitated and breathless young woman. Polly Whitford precipitated herself into the hall, with her shame-faced husband bringing up the rear.

"Imogen, Imogen," she wailed, hurling herself upon her friend. "Imogen, can you ever forgive me? I've had that telephone-boy fired! Can you—you can't ever forgive me?"

Austen Leech waited to hear Imogen's answer with the look of one who had a vital interest in her pardoning capacity. She smiled at him above Polly's curls and embraces.

"Forgive you? I have the most exciting evening of my life to thank you for—and it had some pleasant features!"

EPILOGUE

From the *Toledo Chronicle* of February the nineteenth:

A wedding in which Toledo society is much concerned took place at St. George's church, Hanover Square, London, yesterday, when Miss Imogen Faring, daughter of the late General and Mrs. George Faring, of this city, was married to Mr. Austen Leech, of New York. The bride's cousin, Mr. Harold Faring, of the American consulate at Berlin, gave her away. Mr. Leech met Miss Faring on the steamer on which she sailed last November, and yesterday's wedding was the result of the acquaintance there begun. Among those present were—

LA VEUVE

Par Jean Reibrach

JE DOIS vous avouer, déclara Mme Dorchal, que la jeune veuve dont je vous ai parlé est mère d'une petite fille.

— Mon Dieu ! accepta Revel, puisque j'ai moi-même deux enfants...

Un sourire éclaira dans la pénombre du salon le joli visage aux cheveux blonds de Mme Dorchal :

— Voici donc, dit-elle, une difficulté de levée. Il ne reste plus qu'un point, mais celui-là vous concerne personnellement, et c'est précisément pour le fixer que je vous ai prié de venir.

Et, Revel s'étant incliné :

— Il s'agit, reprit Mme Dorchal, de votre divorce. Le jugement vous a été favorable, puisqu'il vous a laissé la garde des enfants. Mais encore, voudrait-on savoir... dans quelles circonstances... Il a fallu, n'est-ce pas ? des motifs graves ?

— Graves, sans doute, répondit Revel ; mais peut-être pas au sens où vous l'entendez. L'histoire, du reste, tient en deux mots : Ma femme aimait un autre homme. Elle m'a fait l'aveu loyal de cet amour et m'a demandé sa liberté. Je la lui ai accordée.

— Simplement ? s'étonna Mme Dorchal. Vous ne l'aimiez pas, alors ?

— Je l'aimais ! dit Revel.

Puis, le geste las :

— Qu'aurais-je pu faire, alors que les enfants eux-mêmes ne la retenaient point ? Elle se serait enfuie ou elle m'aurait trompé ! Qui sait à quelles aventures nous serions allés ? Non, il vaut mieux que les choses se soient passées ainsi. Elle m'a fourni le prétexte d'une injure grave en refusant, après son départ, de réintégrer le domi-

cile conjugal. Cela a suffi pour le divorce.

— Et depuis ?... s'informa Mme Dorchal.

— Depuis, je ne l'ai pas revue. J'ai su seulement qu'elle avait épousé celui qu'elle aimait...

Une tristesse avait nuancé, malgré lui, la voix de Revel.

— Je vous demande pardon, dit Mme Dorchal, d'avoir ravivé des souvenirs douloureux. Mais votre conduite fut celle d'un sage.

Revel s'inclina de nouveau. Mme Dorchal reprit alors gaiement :

— Il n'y a donc aucun obstacle à mon projet.

Et, tout à coup :

— Je vous ai parlé, tout à l'heure, d'une petite fille. Je ne puis encore vous présenter la mère. Mais voulez-vous voir l'enfant ? Son institutrice, justement, l'a conduite aujourd'hui chez moi. Vous verrez, elle est ravissante.

Revel acquiesça distraitement. Les souvenirs évoqués se prolongeaient en lui douloureusement. Quel coup terrible, ce jour-là, quand, après trois années d'un bonheur, hélas ! illusoire, il avait dû prendre l'héroïque résolution de s'incliner devant l'amour de sa femme, pour un autre ! Et le rude calvaire du divorce, ensuite, son vain effort, plus tard, pour mettre entre cette femme et lui d'autres femmes, sans pouvoir s'y résoudre, avec une peur de ne savoir que sangloter sur leur poitrine ! Et maintenant encore, s'il cherchait un nouveau mariage, n'était-ce pas, en même temps que par un besoin de revivre, à quarante ans,

pour abolir aussi le souvenir, pour oublier enfin celle qui, malgré tout, après six années écoulées, qui restait inoubliable? Ah! Marthe! Où était-elle, maintenant? Sans doute, elle aimait, était aimée. D'autres enfants étaient venus la consoler des premiers! Et pourtant, qui savait? Des déceptions aussi, peut-être...

La songerie de Revel fut interrompue. La petite fille entra; et, déjà, il souriait, lorsqu'il tressaillit brusquement. Derrière l'enfant, l'institutrice qui la guidait avait paru une seconde: une silhouette élégante, un visage grave, dont les yeux ne s'étaient pas levés.

La porte était retombée. Revel demeurait immobile, un peu pâle.

— Qu'avez-vous? demanda Mme Dorchal.

— Je vous demande pardon! répondit-il avec effort, cette personne... qui vient de...

— L'institutrice? demanda Mme Dorchal. Mme Marthe? Eh bien?

— Marthe! répéta Revel.

L'éclair d'une émotion passa dans les yeux de Mme Dorchal, à son tour. Vivement elle demanda:

— C'est elle?

— C'est elle! laissa tomber Revel, bouleversé.

— Laisse-nous, mon enfant, dit Mme Dorchal à la petite fille. Je te rappellerai tout à l'heure!

Il y eut un silence. La main de Revel avait cherché l'appui d'un meuble. Il s'écria:

— Elle! elle!... Tombée là!...

Puis, avec une agitation soudaine:

— Je vous en prie, vous savez, sans doute...

— J'ignore tout d'elle, répondit Mme Dorchal; mais je me renseignerai si vous le désirez!

— Oh! oui. Il faut que je sache!

Mme Dorchal, pensive, regardait Revel profondément:

— Vous l'aimez donc toujours? demanda-t-elle.

Sans répondre, il ouvrit les bras, d'un grand geste lâche:

— Je vous en prie, elle vous dira, sans doute... Demandez-lui...

Mais Mme Dorchal, avec un sourire singulier:

— Je vais, dit-elle, la prier de venir vous parler.

Revel avait reculé au fond du salon, jusqu'aux fenêtres. Les yeux sur la porte, il s'efforçait de contenir le tumulte de son cœur. Viendrait-elle? Et qu'allait-il apprendre?

Des minutes coulèrent. Puis la porte fut rouverte. Le cœur de Revel s'arrêta, ses paupières battirent. Marthe était devant lui. Le salon s'étendait entre eux comme un désert. Elle était debout, immobile, les yeux baissés, le visage pâli de souffrance, voilé de tristesse. Les paroles cérémonieuses que cherchait Revel s'envolèrent. Il jeta, d'un souffle:

— Vous! vous, institutrice!...

Le front de la jeune femme s'inclina encore; les mains, se levant, cachèrent le visage. Il ne vit plus, au-dessus des doigts frêles, que les cheveux châtain où la lumière mettait un reflet de bronze. Une minute, le silence palpita. Le passé, comme un flot trouble, envahissait le cœur de l'homme. Il fit un pas vers elle et, la voix grave, un peu tremblante:

— Alors, vous n'avez pas rencontré le bonheur?

Un sanglot muet souleva les épaules de Marthe.

Revel s'approcha encore, fut au milieu du salon:

— Ce rêve, reprit-il, auquel vous avez tout sacrifié?...

Marthe eut un hochement de tête douloureux, et, la voix sourde:

— Ah! soupira-t-elle, vous avez été bien vengé!

— Vengé! dit Revel avec tristesse; je n'ai jamais désiré l'être! J'espérais, au contraire, que ce bonheur que je n'avais pas su vous donner...

— Le bonheur, interrompit Marthe, je ne l'espérais déjà plus lorsque je vous ai quitté. Je laissais trop de mal derrière moi!

Revel fit quelques pas encore. Il vit qu'elle pleurait. Une pitié l'étreignit. La conscience d'être celui à qui la vie donna raison, de se retrouver au bout du chemin, grandi et

fort devant elle, faible et vaincue, tourmentait son cœur d'un besoin de bonté, de pardon, de consolation. Et quelle souffrance il sentait en elle! Souffrance de sa désillusion, remords de ses enfants abandonnés, remords, peut-être aussi, du mal qu'elle lui avait fait à lui-même! Et lui aussi éprouvait une douleur affreuse. Il souffrait pour elle, il souffrait à cause de ses enfants dont il voyait la mère si misérable, et un remords, en même temps, l'inquiétait tout à coup. Qui savait s'il n'aurait pas dû, autrefois, la défendre contre elle-même, la retenir, la garder? Qui savait ce qu'il y avait eu de naïveté puérile dans la folie de Marthe; ce qu'il y avait eu, au contraire, de sottise ou d'orgueil au fond de la résolution stoïque par laquelle il avait consenti la rupture de leur vie?

Une révolte, cependant, s'éveillait en lui, à la pensée de l'autre qui la lui avait prise, qui l'avait séduite et leurée, qui l'avait fait souffrir, elle, pour qui, jadis, il avait fait de si beaux rêves! Il demanda:

— Ainsi, votre mari vous a ruinée?

Elle fit oui, de la tête.

— Abandonnée, peut-être?

— Il est mort! répondit Marthe.

Ses bras, comme lasses, retombèrent, découvrant son visage. Elle ne pleurait plus, immobile et tragique comme la douleur même. Et Revel, maintenant, se taisait, bouleversé. La voix de Marthe avait jeté sur le mort comme un voile de pardon, presque d'oubli. Le passé, tout à coup, sembla emporté avec lui. Une émotion nouvelle l'agita. Des souvenirs lointains s'évoquaient en présence du visage douloureux, des traits inoubliables. Il se rappela les années anciennes, les premiers mois de leur mariage. Les tendresses d'autrefois frissonnèrent en lui; elles gonflèrent son cœur, et, d'un petit flot, montèrent jusqu'à ses lèvres.

Il fit un pas encore, fut près d'elle:

— Marthe! dit-il.

Puis, tandis que la douceur de cette appellation vibrât encore autour d'eux:

— Marthe, reprit-il, voulez-vous me

permettre de vous parler de moi à mon tour, de vous faire un aveu? J'étais venu ici dans l'intention de me remari-
r. Mme Dorchal...

— Je souhaite ardemment, dit Marthe, que vous soyez heureux!

Mais Revel, hochant la tête à son tour:

— Heureux! Puis-je l'être, à présent que je sais votre peine?

Une détresse sonna dans la voix de Marthe:

— Ah! pourquoi me parlez-vous ainsi? J'aimerais mieux que vous me maudissiez. Mes remords seraient moins cruels!

— Vos remords, Marthe? Mais si, au contraire, il était un moyen de les atténuer, de les abolir?

— Oh! quel qu'il soit, dites! Je le veux! s'écria Marthe. S'il est un moyen de réparer ma folie, parlez! J'obéirai!

Ses yeux, cette fois, s'étaient levés, douloureux, résolus; leur choc émut violemment le cœur de Revel. Mais, se dominant:

— Ce moyen, dit-il avec douceur, serait de reprendre votre place auprès de ceux que vous avez quittés!

Et comme Marthe, n'osant comprendre, attendait, les paupières battant d'angoisse:

— Marthe, le passé n'est plus, continua Revel. Nous sommes libres l'un et l'autre. Votre second mariage ayant été rompu, non par un divorce, mais par la mort, la loi nous permettrait, si vous y consentiez, une nouvelle union.

Marthe jeta un cri:

— Ah! Pierre! Pierre!

Elle laissa aller sa tête sur l'épaule de Revel. Elle pleurait maintenant éperdument. Lui penchait sur le visage de Marthe un sourire qui trembla. A cette minute, il sentait toute sa faiblesse de femme, il comprenait la double erreur du passé. Elle avait cédé au mirage des illusions, était allée vers ce qu'elle croyait l'amour, comme le papillon vers la lumière! Ah! oui, pourquoi ne l'avait-il pas gardée? Mais une douceur croissante le pénétrait. Un parfum ressouvenu mon-

tait jusqu'à lui, dans la buée tiède des larmes. Les minutes heureuses d'autrefois battirent dans son cœur. Sa voix se fit toute basse, un souffle seulement:

— Marthe, je vous aime toujours!

Un frisson passa.

— Oh! moi, répondit Marthe, c'est vous que j'ai toujours aimé!

Et, la tête retombée contre l'épaule de Revel, elle ne bougea plus, blottie là, avec un rire aux lèvres et des regards de rêve.

Un bruit les éveilla.

— Ah! pardon! fit Mme Dorchal qui, un peu malicieusement, peut-être, venait d'ouvrir la porte, je n'entendais plus rien, j'avais cru...

Elle se retirait; mais Revel:

— Entrez, madame, au contraire, je vous en prie!

Et, conduisant Marthe par la main:

— M'excuserez-vous, madame, si vos soins ont obtenu un résultat si imprévu? J'ai l'honneur de vous présenter ma fiancée!

— Votre femme! dit avec un sourire attendri Mme Dorchal.

Elle tendit à Marthe les deux mains:

— Je cherchais à faire deux heureux, dit-elle. Je vois que, sans le vouloir, j'ai réussi au delà de mes espérances!

— En effet, dit Revel, car il y a d'autres heureux encore!

— Nos enfants! s'écria Marthe.

Et Revel souriant:

— Ils sont à la maison. Voulez-vous que nous allions les voir?



A SONG-WRAITH

WHAT art thou that, nightly roaming,
 Haunted all my sleep?
 Like the soul of song and laughter,
 Like an echo following after,
 Through the midnight deep,
 Weary wraith that knows no homing,
 None to watch or keep.

Cold and unreal, as the seeming
 Of a false delight;
 Soul of that which died in singing,
 Upward through the darkness springing,
 Like a bird in flight;
 Like a bird that, vaguely dreaming,
 Warbles in the night.

Weary song, and soul as weary,
 Wandering unblest,
 Is there, then, for thee no shriving,
 Then for thee no safe arriving,
 From thy homeless quest?—
 Thou, that in the midnight dreary
 Darkly seekest rest!

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH WELLS.

CHANTREY'S LAST THROW

By Constance Morris

A MAN with clear-cut, resolute features and an unmistakable air of good breeding arose as Chantrey entered.

"I had about given up hope of you," he said, with an air of indifference at variance with his words.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting," Chantrey replied, sulkily, pulling off his gloves; "I was detained—unavoidably."

It was in one of the broad oak-paneled rooms of the English Club in Constantinople; the hour near midnight. At many tables, play was in progress. Nevertheless, the entrance of the young English attaché had bred sensation. As he crossed the floor, cries of welcome greeted him, but, here and there, a sneer curled a lip, and derisive laughter echoed. His boyish face was dead-pale, his eyes ablaze with the fever of gaming, his whole bearing reckless.

"Private room, to-night, Chantrey?"

"No," doggedly, "this table will do."

In little more than three weeks, he had lost a fortune, and now, driven to last straits, desperation was dominant. The habitués of the club had watched covertly the play-duel between the Briton and the American millionaire, and had wondered with no little apprehension as to the dénouement. The two staked sums greater than was customary in the company about them, and to-night their wagers were rashly extravagant. As the play proceeded, the throng of watchers gradually increased, until the players were surrounded two and three deep. The game was écarté.

Chantrey's weak face grew more and

more pale. Still he played in silence. As, with trembling hands, he took from his pocket his last sum, the perspiration showed upon his forehead and his every movement betrayed his anxiety.

The pile at the American's elbow had grown into a sliding, swollen heap, but now, suddenly, fickle Fortune veered, and, for a while, Chantrey enjoyed her favor. A murmur of sympathy greeted his efforts; at least, he played bravely. His opponent's handsome, aristocratic face betrayed neither elation nor triumph, but more than once he looked keenly at the young attaché as if to gage his feelings or to learn whether the time had come for an experiment he meditated.

"Good luck," he cried at last: "you should force it. Suppose we try dice—it is quicker and more exciting."

A volley of exclamations and oaths followed the American's proposal, but Chantrey's gambler's heart seconded it. The room, a moment before full of high-pitched voices, became tensely silent.

The young man took up the box and, for the first time during his month of riotous playing, he hesitated. It could be seen that he had bitten his lip until it bled.

"After you," he muttered at last, withdrawing his hand.

"As you will," answered the American, carelessly. He shook the box, brought it down sharply on the table and raised it.

"So," he said, softly; "so." He had thrown the highest possible. "Twelve is the game."

Chantrey, who had staked his all,

took the box with a reckless laugh, and the bravest gamblers present drew in their breaths. He raised the box, and down on the rosewood came the ivory cubes.

"By God!" he cried.

He also had thrown the maximum.

His cheek flushed purple. With a player's superstition, he regarded this check to his opponent a presage of victory.

They threw again, and the Englishman won by two points, nine to seven.

"Chantrey!" One of the bystanders touched him on the shoulder. "The money is yours."

"Let it be," Chantrey responded, joyously. His eyes sparkled. Things would at last go his way.

The American pushed an equal amount into the centre of the table, while Chantrey this time threw, and with confidence.

"A deuce and an ace," he said, tremulously.

The American threw silently.

"A four and a two. Better late than never," and he laughed nervously, as he swept toward him the golden pile.

For a moment Chantrey sat staring, dumbly, at the table, his forehead against his palm. Then, rising on uncertain limbs, he muttered between clenched teeth.

"Would to God I had stayed away to-night!"

The words cost him the sympathy of his auditors. They moved away singly, by twos and in groups.

The American's face shone colorless in the light of the two great chandeliers; the Englishman's was a picture of despair.

"I have lost all, all! I have nothing else to stake," he murmured, with dry lips.

Suddenly the other, bending nearer, looked at him intently.

"Oh, yes, you have," he said, gravely.

"If I have, it's yours to play for," Chantrey cried, recklessly.

"Is that a bargain?" asked the victor, slowly. "Is it a bargain, I say?"

"Is what a bargain?" the young man queried, stung by something in the other's tone.

"That we play for something you possess—something that I—I care enough about to wager high for. If you win, you shall have all that has been staked for the past month, on both sides. Do you comprehend? I said on both sides. If you lose—well, you forfeit to me the thing you stake."

"But what thing, what thing?" Chantrey's voice broke shrilly on the air in bewilderment.

"Your wife," the American answered, bluntly. Then he leaned back and looked at the other man through half-closed lids.

Chantrey stared at him, stupidly.

"My wife—my wife! I do not understand. Of what use will she be?"

"That is my business," was the dry answer. "If you lose, she is there; and, if you win, she is still there. She is the stake and shall decide."

The young attaché's eyes were bloodshot. His brain was a maze, and he could hardly think coherently. He had known men to stake their all, even their honor, but their love—never. He had seen his money fall away day by day; and he had noted many of his wife's tender self-denials. The proposition came at an unfortunate moment—a moment when the excitement of the play had given way to depression. The temptation to accept—the thought that by a single cast he might recoup himself and set himself right with her—was too much for him.

"I accept," he said, slowly; and then again, vehemently, "I accept."

"So," said his opponent, with a flicker of triumph in his eyes. "But you observe in any case your wife has the choice, my friend."

Chantrey did not answer. The American made him a sign to throw, and the young man stood silently, guiltily, for one breathless moment, while the other waited with tortured nerves. Then, with the light of battle smoldering in his eyes, he swallowed

hard, and, with a hand that scarcely let the dice go, threw.

Seven.

The American took the box up carelessly in his white, virile hand and, without hesitancy, let the ivories fall on the table.

Eight.

The young man's eyes dilated in sudden terror, and the other waited for some cry of violence or reproach. It did not come. Chantrey stood as one stunned, his gaze fixed on the white cubes which had cost him so dearly. Finally, turning, he said, very calmly:

"I have lost!"

"So I see," answered the other, slowly.

"I have lost and—and I will pay. Come! But," he continued, turning to the elder man, violently, "don't speak to me—that's all, don't speak to me!"

Jumping into a *voiture*, they hurried to the stone house with the latticed door below the two gables. On this Chantrey knocked. In the momentary pause before it yielded, the American turned to him, and said, with a calmness that was assumed:

"If she is sleeping, don't awaken her."

"Damn you," retorted Chantrey, his voice shrill and uneven, "do you think I notice your considerations? I tell you I have played for my life and lost—and lost," and his voice cracked in his effort to keep down the lump that was trying to impede his speech.

Together, they entered. Some one in the farthest end of the dim room with the silver lamps had risen.

"Mrs. Chantrey," said the American, in a cool, even voice, "I dared not hope to meet a hostess at this late hour;" and he looked with calmly smiling eyes at the mobile, tender face before him.

She stood, in her silver-lilied dress, pure and brilliant among the shadows, with orange flowers at her waist. The dark fringe of her lashes cast soft shades on her delicate cheeks, and her finely-cut lips challenged a world to kiss their fugitive lines.

She made the American no reply, but, with growing alarm, she turned to Chantrey.

"What is it, Cecil?" she asked, divining in his utter dejection some new unhappiness. "What is it?"

Chilled, sobered and affrighted, he looked at her with sullen, gloomy eyes, and, with pallid lips, said:

"I am ruined. I have lost all, money, lands, Vauxingham itself, at play."

The woman threw back her head and drew in her breath sharply, once, twice; and each breath hurt the American as if he were flecked on the raw.

"God forgive you, Cecil," she said.

And so he stood before her, his motionless arms limp at his sides, the shamed blood making purple his cheeks, his chin on his breast, and confessed his treachery.

As the woman slowly comprehended, she looked from one to the other in a stupor. Then she crossed the room, swiftly, to the American.

"And you?" she whispered; "and you?" She looked him full in the eyes with the flame of passion in her face. "And you could wrong me so?" she added, with reproach.

"No, no, it is not true," he retorted, his voice for once a note higher than its ordinary calm. "I did it but to try him, and he—he accepted."

"It is not that," she answered, and in her tone were wretchedness and grief. "As for him," and she turned with fine contempt to the gloomy figure of Chantrey, who had dropped into a chair, "as for him, he is not fit to live, he is not fit to die! But me, me!" and she beat her breasts with her hands; "am I so base a thing, that you can put me up for barter and sale?" And softly on the stillness of the room sounded her sobs, passionate, broken-hearted, then tremulous with caught-in breath.

"Beatrice!" The American's voice was grave and his eyes glowed with tenderness and adoration. She ceased to weep and looked at him, startled by the solemnity of his tone. "What will be demanded of you to-night will

only be demanded by your own conscience, by your own desires. You have always trusted me, now listen to me."

She watched him out of wondering eyes as he continued:

"For thirty-eight years I have lived, and, for the greater part of thirty-eight years I have been seeking throughout the world the woman who was made for me and whom a great God destined to be mine. In Naples, years ago, I thought I had found her, but the world did not deviate by a single line from its course. Then again, in Sumatra, I thought my search ended, but the four seasons did not invert their order on that account. Once, I thought I had found my love in America, but still the earth revolved and the stars shone; and I came to know, what I had fancied, love was but a counterfeit seen through the prism of desire.

"Then, one day," he went on, "I met you, and I thanked God that I had waited. One day, I meditated a theft, because I coveted a neighbor's wife, and I said to myself, 'The world calls her a wife, but she is not protected—she is insulted and humiliated every day of her life. Why should not I, who love her, make her happy? The most cruel of follies is the binding together of two lives—like two corpses—from which life has gone.'"

She turned and walked to the embrasured window. In the silence, the American could hear his heart beating.

"I am no expert at love-making. I only know great love has come to me, and therefore I say to you, before him,"—and he pointed to the wretched figure of the younger man, limp in the chair—"before him who swore to protect you, but who has only brought misfortune upon you; who swore to guard you, but who has left you to temptations and dangers; who swore to love you, but who has not even been a faithful husband—"

"It is a lie! it is a lie!" cried Chantrey, hoarsely.

The American went on, quietly, gravely, looking only at the woman in

the shadows near the iron lattice of the unshuttered window:

"You know me, do you not? Have you ever heard of anything in my life that would be a reproach, a scandal or a dishonor? I say to you, all is fair in love and war, and, from the time I met you, I set myself a task, but through it all I played fair. Do you deny me the right to make the woman I love happy? Are you going to give the rest of your beautiful life to a man who this night could so cruelly and deliberately debase you—who has been weighed in the balance and found wanting? It is true, I also played, but for a great stake—for your love, for my future, for your happiness. And I can make you happy! Will you come to me, will you trust me? Will you stand for a few months the condemnation of your world until the time when you can be my wife?"

The silver lamps burned still lower; the silken curtains near the door were stirred by the cool breeze, and the silence was broken only by the woman's soft breathing.

"Will you come, I say? No woman shall know greater love. There will be no burden but shall be taken from your shoulders. I shall set you so high, no reproach will ever reach you, no pain ever destroy the serenity of your life. O thou woman of all the world!"

He walked to where she stood motionless and pointed out into the serene Oriental night.

"See, over there on the Bosphorus lies the yacht that will be our paradise. In the morning, when you awaken, your eyes shall look only on beautiful things, and at night they will close with only the thought that I love you."

He leaned low toward her in the dimness of the room and whispered, just above his breath, gently and quietly:

"With my soul and body, I love you!"

The woman stood and gazed at him with earnest gravity, long and resolutely. Over all the scene without hung the strange mystery of a great city at night. Far down the street, a belated traveler passed, the echo of his

tread mingling with the throb of her pulses. All trace of color had faded from her cheeks, and all grief and bitterness from her white face.

Her mind was busy with the months of solitude she had passed in that room; with the depression that little by little had sapped her strength and hope; with the slow decay of her love, and, finally, with this last great wrong. And that which was uppermost in her mind, which steeled her soul and justified the worst, was not the months of loneliness, of deprivation, not the slight of his disloyalty, but the intolerable thought that he could make of her, whom he had once loved, a commodity to be wagered!

For one mortal—one immortal minute, she faced the American, and then closed her lids as though in great pain. She caught her breath tremulously, turned, and with proud head erect came unhesitatingly into the centre of the room. From off her hand, she drew slowly a plain gold ring and placed it

on the table, silently, before the guilty, bowed figure in the chair. Then, with unflinching steps and uplifted chin, she passed through the doorway.

The American stood, statue-like, breathless, listening. Her retreating footsteps halted at the stair, and, with strained hearing, he waited, while hope and fear played leap-frog in his brain. Instinctively, he knew that the instant of her choice had come. For her to ascend to her chamber meant to accept a future the misery of which was as certain as death; to pass out into the night through the latticed portal was to lay hold on the omnipotent, exquisite present, and all of its entailed happiness.

An eternity crowded itself into ten seconds, and then upon his ear fell the click of the latch. With hammering heart and bounding nerves he advanced from the shadow, and strode out into the passage.

Over the chill quiescence of the room hung the gloom of desolation.



THE OLD MAN

ONCE he was young, and earth a star
That sang beneath his feet;
But that old time is dim and far,
Hardly his heaven holds a star—
Only dull worlds that slow repeat
The dull world underneath his feet.

How did it happen? No one knows,
And he knows least of all;
Slowly the lines of morn grew dim,
Suddenly Youth looked back on him,
Beneath his feet the leaves of Fall,
Crumbled a little. This was all.

FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



A BEAUTIFUL woman is the only poem that never yearns to appear in print.

THIS BOOK FOR YOU

I LEAVE this book for you, O friend of mine,
 To speak for me that day my lips are dumb;
 A silent messenger I bid it come,
 To gain the welcome I must needs resign.
 I pray you on that night you miss me most,
 That night when most you crave a word of me,
 Beside your fire and once again my host,
 Open this book and greet me silently,
 And read the poem that the worn page shows
 I loved the best, and linger on the line
 I marked there, as to say, "Lo, once a rose
 I closed here for your finding, that was mine."
 And, otherwhere, I know that you will say,
 "Perchance she smiled here," and your smile will break
 Upon your lips for our old laughter's sake,
 And I shall hear, though very far away.
 And in your reading, if perchance you see
 Upon one page the stain a tear might leave,
 I doubt not our two hands may meet and cleave
 Once more in their old bond of sympathy.
 And in the mists of that dim borderland,
 Beyond our 'wilderer thought of time and space,
 I think our souls a little while may stand,
 And look a moment in each other's face.

McCREA PICKERING.



A PRECAUTION

MRS. VON BLUMER—Don't forget to ask the clergyman to bless the food,
 my dear.

VON BLUMER—Perhaps, with this new cook of ours, we'd better wait until
 the dinner is over.



DEPARTING VISITOR—Good-bye, little Ethel! You may be a grown young
 lady before you see me again.

CANDID LITTLE ETHEL—Yes, ma'am; I hope so.

THE SNARES OF A SUBURBAN CUPID

By James French Dorrance

“WELL, I'm the lucky one!” I cried, letting myself into Bachelors' Paradise, the flat just east of the Avenue which five of us had occupied for a little short of three years. “I sure am.”

I had just returned from the suburb of Bronxville, where I had seconded at the marriage-mill of one Richard Albertson, a friend from childhood, and, until yesterday, my flat-mate. It made the fourth time this Winter that I'd been best man, and after every ceremony there was another spare room in Paradise.

With the passing of Dick, the whole flat fell to me, and I was to live there alone until our lease ran out in June—a matter of some five months. The place would be as lonely as a theatre on Sunday morning. It certainly was not on this account that I felt that luck was with me.

The rejoicing was over my escape from matrimony. Four out of five of us had fallen into the pit which knows no ending short of death or the divorce court. And I was the one who escaped! It was passing strange, too, that it had so come about. From childhood it had been predicted that I would marry young, and my four flat-mates were certain of it. It all seemed so settled that I never had the courage to protest against the fate.

The quartette that had gone, on the other hand, boasted often and loudly that no woman would ever lead them under the yoke. They knew when they were well off and bachelors they would remain to the end of the chap-

ter. All I can say is, that it was a mighty short chapter.

The more I thought over it that night of Dick's passing, the more strange it all seemed. When four as solid, settled bachelors as one ever found in the same city directory rush one after the other into the benedick class, is it accident? Is it not, rather, a disease? The question required meditation.

I climbed out of my frock-suit into pajamas and a robe; hauled the most comfortable Morris chair before the fire; found a pipe that drew, a bottle that poured red liquor, a siphon that fizzed, a glass to be filled; and I was ready to grapple with the problem.

By way of beginning, I reminded myself that for two years we five had been as happy as men can be outside the happy hunting grounds or Bagdad. We had a good cook and a trembling janitor. We were too young to be crusty, and too old to scrap over trifles. We knew plenty of nice girls, and did the social act in moderation, clearing off our indebtednesses with a party twice a year. One could not have found a cloud on the ceiling of the flat with the biggest telescope they have up at Columbia, though I'm not so sure about cobwebs.

Then that insidious little villain, Cupid, crept into the circle, claiming Bobby Compton as his first victim. The happy-home-and-fireside mark was on him from the time he went to that boat-club dance on Staten Island. The girl lived a dreadful distance in the interior, too—whole miles from the ferry landing at St. George. Bobby

swore that he covered the entire Borough of Richmond in the three times he lost himself getting to and from her house.

Bluff old Goodhue was next, though what he ever saw in that little East Rockaway blonde is more than I can make out. And East Rockaway! Of all the places to get to or from or mixed up about, East Rockaway is the limit. Frank's wedding-party spread itself through seven different Rockaways along the Long Island shore, and half of the people were not in at the finish at all!

Third to go was John Paull, who had the excuse of a husky and unexpected inheritance for casting his lot with the best-looking girl in Yonkers. Dick and I stood by him to the end of a long church ceremony, and did our best to let every one in the town know how happy he was until the Albany express came to the rescue.

And you will remember that I had just come from the ending of Dick, who had shouldered the responsibility of a flyaway youngster of eighteen with a Bronxville bringing-up.

"It must be a disease," I was saying, confidentially, to the fire, when, suddenly, a Sherlock Holmes feeling crept over me and I had a clue. No, to be accurate, I had four clues.

"Staten Island, East Rockaway, Yonkers, Bronxville!" I confided to the fire.

Then I counted them off on my fingers—one should do that with clues—"Staten Island, East Rockaway, Yonkers, Bronxville."

It spelled nothing but "Suburbs."

"It is not an urban complaint," was my very evident deduction. "The Cupid-germ lurks in the suburbs."

A little reflection cleared the problem wonderfully. It explained why none of the four had fallen during the first two years. The girls they knew all lived in New York proper. It was not until the second Summer that they began to go into the suburbs.

It explained my escape—I knew no suburban damsels. It held out the

promise of future safety—stay among the triflers of Manhattan.

Still, I was not satisfied. I wanted to know how it was done—all the little secrets of the play, all the ins and outs of the suburban girl's game of hearts.

"Try original research," crackled the fire.

"On whom, I'd like to know?" I demanded.

"That New Jersey girl you meet at Cinderellas," was the answer from the hearth or somewhere.

Sure enough! I had forgotten her! I did know a girl in the suburbs. Straightway, I did a mock-trembling act.

She was a very good-looking girl, I remembered now, quite clearly. I found her name on a discarded dance-programme—Crete Carstans. We had met at several dances, and she had been a dream in the waltz. She gave me an opportunity when the Winter was nearly over, and I asked her if I might call.

"You won't want to when you know," she smiled back.

"Know what?" I demanded, suspecting nothing worse than news of her engagement to some other chap.

"Where I live," she continued.

"Where?" I asked, with less eagerness.

"In New Jersey," she answered, demurely.

"Not Hoboken?" I exclaimed.

"Nothing worse than Hackensack," she assured me; and that ended it, though once I went so far as to look up the time-table of the Hackensack and Somewhere Railroad, which, with a ferry-boat, connects the town in which she lived and the metropolis.

Now, how different! With the spirit of the investigator, the explorer, the original researcher, running high in my veins, Hackensack became a Mecca. It was just what I wanted. Going into the suburbs strictly as a student surely would not be dangerous. I would label every move as it was made, and put down each snare as carefully as the suburban Cupid set them for me. Up to the point of a proposal, I

would play into the hands of the enemy, but beyond and into the realm of the engaged, I would not go. Even the interest of science, I felt, did not excuse one who deliberately made and broke an engagement to marry. But, as far as the point of proposal, I would be a most eager student.

That Miss Carstans might not care to play with me, that I might not be considered eligible from a suburban matrimonial standpoint, never entered my head. For once, however, vanity and conceit did not lead to a fall. I wrote a most careful note and was given an evening the following week.

The day before the initial visit, I purchased a blank-book and, in my best hand, set down on the title-page the following inscription:

Original Research
into the
Snares of Suburban Cupids.

It really looked quite businesslike, and I cannot set forth the remainder of this narrative better than to quote you the notations which I made there from time to time.

January 30.

Hackensack is a town of eight, ten—I don't know how many thousand people. The twenty miles from New York seem a hundred before the train gets one there. There are two society streets, and the young woman lives on one of them. Her father is a lawyer who makes daily trips to his office on Nassau street, and her mother is at the head of the local chapter of the Sisters of Plymouth Rock—which, by the way, has nothing to do with the raising of chickens, as I first suspected.

Miss Carstans entertains in a most comfortable parlor and doesn't give a hang for the curtains—which allows one to smoke. Thank the Lord! The last train starts for town at 10.30 o'clock. If she had not warned me I should have missed it.

The worst of it is the long ride to town in an empty train and freezing ferry-boat. She is a pretty girl, though.

February 6.

It is surprising how soon one gets to know a person well—sometimes. We seemed like old, old friends to-night. I told her all about myself, even to family and prospects. Miss Crete's mother came in under the excuse of bringing us lemonade and cake. She is a good advertisement for the daughter—looks about thirty of her forty-five years, has figure and color and no wrinkles to speak of. Is there not an old warning, "Look well at the mother before you take the daughter"? The Carstanses need have no fear. The mother is the best move yet.

I have called for two years on that Riverside Drive girl and never had a glimpse of her mother. And I can't even imagine any member of Miss Madison Avenue's family bringing in lemonade and cake. Yet it seemed just the right thing in Hackensack. Miss Crete's beauty certainly grows on one.

February 13.

She allowed me to miss my train last night, and it is about as fit a snare as Cupid ever laid in or out of the suburbs. Yet it was all done so simply that it was a long time before I put the label on.

The first night I called we made the agreement that she was to tell me in time for the train. Last night she remembered at 10.33, when the locomotive whistled yard limits. There was no other train until six in the morning, and I had visions of the usual country-town hotel with its full line of horrors. But not so! Again the mother appeared, and her invitation to spend the night under their roof was so genuine one could not refuse. She worried a little over the time I had to be at the office in the morning, and was relieved when it appeared that I could go in on the same train with Father Carstans. I met the rest of the family at a sort of nightcap lunch, and then the father showed me into the most home-like quarters I've run across since I left Batavia.

I was surprised to see Crete at breakfast. She presided in her mother's stead, and poured the coffee for us. Really, she was beautiful. I have always said I would never marry a woman until I had seen her at breakfast.

Father Carstans is a jolly good fellow, even early in the morning. He is quite enthusiastic over living in the country, and thinks there is no place like Hackensack.

February 20.

Crete is in town this week visiting an aunt, and we have been twice to the theatre. She is better dressed than most city girls, yet, to-night, she confessed that the gown she wore had been made with her own hands. It was her mother's idea, she said—a little old-fashioned, but lots of fun after one learned how. It will be mighty comforting to the man she marries, to escape dressmakers' bills. She grows more beautiful every day, and it is the sort of beauty that one never tires of.

February 27.

To-night we went to call on friends of Crete's, who have just been married. They have a little house all to themselves, and it is the coziest proposition I can remember. The fellow only draws half as much salary as I do. It must be very satisfying to have a place all your own that way.

By the way, this is the most likely snare yet developed. Of course, I don't believe for a moment that Crete had any idea of the effect it would have on me. She is not that sort.

Miss Riverside Drive took me to see a new home once. It was a grand apartment and furnished like the Prince Henry suite at the Waldorf. The annual rent was nearly as much as the whole Hackensack outfit cost. I came away convinced that marriage was a luxury that James could not enjoy, even if he desired it with his whole soul. It is comfortable to know that you can have a thing like this if you want it, and I've been blessing the Hackensack revelation.

March 9.

For some time Mrs. Carstans has been possessed of the fear that I was lonely on Sundays, so I spent yesterday in Hackensack. I went out Saturday night to a little dance at the clubhouse. Friendly place, that clubhouse, and a jolly good crowd. It does not cost a fortune to belong, and if your great-great-grandfather did not come over when ours did, why, nothing is said about it.

I never noticed before the effect religion has on the beauty of women who are really devout. Crete is devout at prayers, and a light comes into her eyes that is heavenly. She is the most beautiful woman in the whole wide world, and none is better.

March 11.

Mr. Carstans took dinner with me at the club to-night. We spent a pleasant evening living over the college days, though his ended twenty-five years before mine began. He told me of a prize bargain in suburban real estate. Says it is the best investment in the home-property line that he has seen for an age. Come to think of it, this entry has nothing whatever to do with Cupid's snares.

March 15.

I went out to look at that property to-day. Crete went with me and thought it fine. It is a bargain, and I'll close for it to-morrow.

There seems to be nothing doing in the snare line lately. I've kept close watch. Master Cupid must be asleep.

Her brothers have taken to calling me Jim, but there is not a trace of flippancy about it.

I am sure every good American ought to be a landowner.

March 20.

We hit on a new amusement to-night—drawing plans for a house. I'm sure I should have been an architect, and Crete has more ideas than a designer of advertising. We built up the smartest little home on paper! I have the drawings in my pocket, and, just for fun, I'm going to get an esti-

mate on the cost of working them out.

In reading this over I detect some of the earmarks of a snare; but that can't be, for the drawing idea was all my own.

In some ways Crete reminds me of my mother.

March 28.

Crete was in the city to-day in search of ideas. Another of her friends is going to be married, and she asked Crete to help her select furniture. They took me along.

It doesn't cost so much; after all, to fit out a house, if you know where and how to buy. Of course, every chair does not have to be Empire or every table a signed mahogany. Really, some chaps have painted some very desirable things since the time of Velasquez and Millet.

What perfect taste Crete has! I believe she could furnish a Harlem flat so that it would be livable. And give her a whole house to do with as

she likes—well, paradise has but one advantage—eternity.

March 29.

I've been thinking it over, and this is the end. I'm off for Hackensack to ask the finest woman that ever breathed to honor me as never man was honored before. Perhaps that is putting it a little strong, but it expresses my feelings. If she says yes, we'll build on that lot I bought, and her friend can't have a single one of the furnishing ideas.

Snares?

There has not been a single snare! She wouldn't set a snare for the finest man in the world, to say nothing of only me.

Did I think I was lucky in escaping? Well, I've been a fool! I begrudge the four who went before, every minute of the start they have.

Lucky one? I'll be the lucky one if Crete says yes.

March 30.

She said it.



TOKENS

I CRUSH the faded roses into dust,
Then cast their fragrant ashes on the air,
A gift to secret winds that waft them where
No eyes may mark fulfilment of the trust;
I hold the violets a moment, just
To live once more the hour when they were fair;
The yellowed letters lie beside them there,
So sweet I cannot burn them—as I must!

Yet, after all, I count the tokens naught,
Since in thy heart the roses grow for me,
And every violet brings me the whole
Of thy great tenderness and loving thought—
Like some illumined missal, words from thee
Are lettered on the pages of my soul.

MYRTLE REED.

PROSE AND POETRY

MY life had been but halting prose
 Throughout the blossom-time,
 While birds sang lyrics to the rose,
 And every breeze that crossed the close
 Hymned golden Summer's prime!

While all the world went lilting past
 To cadenced chord and chime,
 And hopes were high and pulses fast,
 My metre lagged—until, at last,
 Love came and brought the rhyme.

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.



THE TRAINED NURSE

WHEN I was sick I had a trained nurse. She came in the still watches of one evening, and laid her soft, cool, twenty-five-dollar-a-week hand on my burning pauper brow, and thenceforth her salary and my fever ran on together, not even stopping for meals—that is to say, the nurse herself stopped for meals, but not her salary. About noon each day, when the glad outside world was caroling to the sky, when the merry school-boy was skipping homeward, and the flowers were dancing in the sunlight, she would part from me with tears in her eyes and a choking sensation in her throat and a look of keen agony, and slope gently down-stairs, and spend a few hours over the family board, while the cook threatened to leave, and the hot-water bottle on my jaded stomach became frappée.

She came to me with a complete set of books, a clinical thermometer, and the story of her past life. When she had taken away my temperature, and gone off with it to some far corner of the room, and examined it critically by the light of a tallow-dip, and set it down in Ledger B, where I couldn't see it, she picked up her trusty pad, and began to write a historical novel, of which I was the unhappy hero. From that moment, I felt that about me there was nothing sacred.

The second day after she came, when all the towels had been used up, and all my ingenious children were paving the back yard with remnants of dry toast, and the doctor had told her all about me that she hadn't been able to find out herself, she began to relate to me the story of her past. Two weeks later, the crises in her story and my fever were both passed. We both survived; but, at this late day, I have an idea that her story is even now the more robust of the two.

The trained nurse is now a necessity in every modern home. As an antidote to medical science, she has no equal. Dressed in rich, but not too gaudy, bed-ticking, and armed with medals she won in the Crimean War for reading *Punch* aloud to the sick soldiers, she stands over one's bedside like a guardian angel, and no germ can pass the lines without giving the countersign.

TOM MASSON.

THE CORROSIVE HOUR

By Gertrude Lynch

THERE were five red-carpeted steps from the hall to the reception-room. Mrs. Green, stout, brunette and fifty, had a separate exclamation for each.

"You have made the same mistake before!

"She will capture him just as she did Frank Arlington, Will Evans and a score of others!

"I admire bravery, but recklessness is a different thing!

"You are never sure of a man, even at the altar; not until you reach the front door of the church—going out!

"If she succeeds, you have nobody to blame but yourself."

These remarks were thrown like arrows over her shoulders, which, notwithstanding her age, were firm, white and beautifully molded. It was a favorite saying of Mrs. Green that shoulders and epigrams were the last attractions to leave a woman.

Mary Felton met the verbal weapons as she might have faced poisoned shafts, did duty demand.

There was a proud poise to her head, and her eyes were as fearless as those of a young fawn which has never known any life but that of the pleasure. They were large, candid and brown. They looked you in the face, and seemed to challenge you to show your soul as she showed her own.

They performed that office now, and Mrs. Green felt a little uncomfortable. For many years she had compromised with the world, but she had not forgotten that there was a time when she had been as contemptuous of the shams and insincerities as was the girl who followed in her wake.

When they reached the reception-

room they sat side by side on a divan, and the older woman continued her remarks.

"I know, my dear, what you are going to say before you open your lips. You have said it a thousand times, if not in words, in gestures, in silence. The most difficult lesson in life is that of concession, but we all have to learn it and practise it, until at last we forget that we ever had any decision or ideals—I know, I know!"

She was depressed for a moment, and then, shaking herself free from the mood, as was her wont—"You have fully made up your mind to ask her? The invitation is not sent. Think what you are doing. She is a very attractive girl, and, like all men, he is susceptible to flattery and beauty—her strongest weapons."

The long, slender fingers of Mary Felton, dallying with the note of invitation, trembled slightly.

"I will not compromise with what I think is right. It is not daring, it is principle. I will have no man's affection unless it is given to me, freely, after due test of other women's charms. I will have no relation that is based upon a fear."

"And you will bring these two together, knowing that the chances are that she will exert her utmost power to fascinate him—for a time."

"Forever—if for a time."

"You mean that, too?"

Again the proud head was raised and again the syllables, full, resonant, sounded like the warning of a silver bell.

"If he leaves me for her, it is irrevocable."

"You cannot forgive?"

"It is not forgiveness; it is temperament. I can no more change that than I can the color of my eyes."

"Temperaments are flexible; we can bend them to our will."

"They are flexible, as elastic is, which returns to its original form as soon as pressure is removed. One cannot spend one's life in an artificial position, pulling one's temperament this way and that, to suit occasion. I cannot play the patient Griselda; I cannot wait for the returns of a man who is so weak that a new gown, a clever word, a classic profile, can allure him from his allegiance. What is friendship, love, without perfect loyalty—nothing, less than nothing, shifting elements, having neither value nor foundation. I could easily forgive, but I could not trust myself in the power of a feeling which is like a will-o'-the-wisp. No, if Chandler Ellsworth falls a victim to Inez's blandishments, he stays where he falls."

"You are hard."

The girl thought a moment. "I suppose it sounds so; words are cruel things. I know myself, that is all—and knowledge always has its profile turned to the world. There is nothing soft or alluring about it."

Mrs. Green sighed.

Mary Felton continued: "Supposing I married him. Can you imagine me the sort of girl who excludes all attractive women from her friendship for fear of her husband; who surrounds herself with the plain, stupid, resistible; who is never happy when he is out of her sight, unless she can account for his time; who, in public, keeps one eye open for possible entanglements? Impossible as that would be for me, how many women we both know who live that life! No, a thousand times, no. I would rather die than compromise myself to that extent. And, when one begins to compromise, where is one to end?"

Mrs. Green blushed under her thin coat of rouge.

Until her husband's death, she had practically lived the existence that Mary Felton described. She had been

the unattractive wife of an attractive man, one who was vain of his power among women, and who had never allowed it to become exhausted from disuse. It was in seeking happiness out of such conditions that she had learned the lesson of compromise, which she was now striving to inculcate into the mind of the younger woman.

While she sat, lost in the thoughts that these unconscious words evoked, Mary Felton rose and touched the bell. On the appearance of the maid, she handed her the note, and then turned to her companion with a smile.

"It is too late now to argue; the die is cast. Possibly fate ordained that I should exist solely for the purpose of bringing these two together, who knows? There are less important reasons for incarnation, I am sure, than that. Come, smile!"

She approached the older woman, and placed her hands lovingly about her. "Don't, my dear friend. Don't worry. Let me play the game my own way, with my few cards, and by my few rules. It is all I can do. If I lose, I shall be a good gambler. I shall smile until the last."

"I can't jest. A sense of humor is all right until it makes one ineffective, then it is all wrong. To treat humorously some situations in life is to lessen one's dignity."

"And this is one?"

Mrs. Green did not answer directly. "I like Clifford Ellsworth. I should be happy if you married him."

"He has never asked me."

"But you have never given him the opportunity—why?"

"I could not, until he had seen Inez."

"Oh, youth! youth!"

"Listen. Inez Blair is my court of last appeal. If a man can pass that test, he is safe for all time. She is the most attractive, the most beautiful woman I have ever known. If I were a man, I should follow the procession of moths. She has taken all the arts and graces for her possessions, and she is without heart, which is ever a handicap. She has above all that mysterious charm which binds these qualities

into a Gordian knot of fascination. The vitality that other women diffuse in a thousand directions, she concentrates on one ambition—to attract every man whose path crosses her orbit; some time she will marry, when she finds one who interests her sufficiently, and supplements that interest with eligible qualities. Clifford Ellsworth may be that man—who can tell? I must give her the chance to find out. It is useless to argue with me; I must."

Then, as her companion said nothing: "Come, let us talk of something else. I am tired of the subject."

Mrs. Green answered, more quickly than usual:

"Willingly. I was tired of it before we commenced."

Mrs. Green detained Inez Blair as she was leaving the dressing-room, after having removed her wraps. In an opposite corner two girls were arranging their slippers, and were absorbed in a low-toned confidence as to the relative merits of Louis Quinze and Louis Seize.

"I am going home to-morrow. I am sorry to have missed you, when we exchanged calls."

"Not so sorry as I, dear Mrs. Green. I see you so seldom on our flying trips. That country home of yours must be very alluring."

"I love it. I have been a widow now fourteen years, but I cannot bring myself to the point of giving up the old place; still, if Mary should ever need me I would do so willingly."

"You don't think she will?"

"Her aunt can't live much longer; she has been bedridden for months." She paused a moment. "If I could only leave her in the care of a good man!"

"Good men are not numerous."

"There is one."

"Indeed? I have missed him!"

"There are plenty if you have the right touchstone."

"Or tombstone? The cemeteries, I understand, are filled with them. But this one, the living one—who is he?"

Mrs. Green looked around. The

two girls were reinforced by others. They were all busy with finishing touches, and no one's attention was caught by the tête-à-tête at the door.

"Clifford Ellsworth. You know him?"

"I have never even heard of him. I have been away, you know. He is a new star. Is he handsome, virtuous, rich and charming? He must be or you would not want him for Mary."

"He is all these."

"And I am to meet this paragon to-night?"

Mrs. Green's tone became less conventional, more serious. "Yes, Inez, you are to meet him to-night. It is the dearest wish of my heart that he marry Mary, and she, I think, cares for him—or will."

Soul to soul they stood. The older woman had taken a chance. She had thrown the plummet into this girl's nature that was like a shallow pond which has unexpected depths.

"You want her anchored? It is a great thing to be anchored in the shifting sands."

"She must be. She will be alone in a few months—if not before, and the world is a cruel place for a lonely woman."

"And all women are lonely. We will help her—you and I."

The beautiful girl bent her head a moment, and their lips met. There were tears in the pretty eyes when they were raised.

"If I had a friend like you—who knows!"

She turned away, and, after a moment, left the room, Mrs. Green joining the group at the cheval-glass, so that their entrance together might not excite Mary Felton's suspicions.

The evening would have been as banal as most of its kind had it not been for its undercurrent of conflicting emotions.

Clifford Ellsworth did not arrive until late. When he came into the room, his eye was caught by the foreground picture. It was charming enough to have attracted one less susceptible to the beautiful than himself.

Near him sat Inez Blair. She was in a rose-tinted gown, and seemed dainty and colorful as a flower. About her were grouped half-a-dozen men; one sat at her feet with his arms crossed about his knees and his eyes turned in a look of hopeless adoration; another was bending over her shoulders, whispering low-toned flatteries, and gazing in the intervals at her perfect profile; facing her stood a trio with arms interlocked, making serio-comic remarks concerning each other's attempts to engross her attention. In other parts of the room were men, who, though constant in seeming, were renegades in spirit—looked furtively past their companions to the centre group, wondering as to the cause of the constant laughter, envying their more fortunate fellows the advantage of place.

Inez Blair had the peculiar faculty of stimulating men while she acted as an anesthetic to women. As a tropically beautiful woman may, at her entrance, make others of her sex, who until that moment have enjoyed a brief triumph, seem less attractive than they are in reality, so, in the irrepressible flow of her small talk, her subtle flatteries, her quick repartee, inexhaustible fund of anecdote, supplemented by tact and physical attraction, Inez Blair was as a moon in a starlit sky, paling the lesser lights into insignificance.

Mary Felton rose to meet Clifford Ellsworth, and they chatted together a moment. She was depressed by the violence of her emotion; a crucial moment in her life was at hand, and she could not free herself from the shadow of its approach. He responded, unconsciously, to her mood, and they stood, half-embarrassed, half-resentful of the change in each other, neither reading the riddle completely.

Laughter from the centre group aroused them. Clifford Ellsworth looked quickly over his shoulder. There was a musical cadence in the girl's tone, which made his heart beat a little faster; then he turned to his hostess.

"You have a jolly little party."

Anything did to explain his unconscious gesture.

"It is always gay where Miss Blair is. You must meet her."

"Must I?" The word was conventional, not protesting.

"Yes, she is an old friend of school-day time. We haven't seen much of each other of late, for she has been out of town, and I have been a slave to auntie. Come."

He followed obediently.

The group of men made way for them, and Mary introduced the two.

Inez's lips grew a little tense as their eyes met. He was a handsome man, and there was something in his glance which seemed to promise more than the twentieth-century Apollo usually does, mentally and magnetically. She already regretted her promise, but she intended to be true to her word.

She bowed in acknowledgment to his greeting, then turned to a man on her left to continue her interrupted conversation.

"You were going?"

Mary Felton was not to be diverted from her purpose. She waited until the anecdote and its laughter were finished, then said:

"Come, you have monopolized Miss Blair long enough; I want her to talk to Mr. Ellsworth." She made a graceful gesture, indicative of brushing them aside, as one would a group of moths from a brilliant flame. "Mr. King, you are to go and make your apologies to Mrs. Green for your neglect. You have not seen her since she was here last Winter. Mr. Bemis—" Exercising her privilege as hostess, she dismissed him in another direction, then turned to the trio, who stood protesting to the last. As they started to obey, Inez held out a detaining hand.

"I have allowed you to rob me of all, but Benjamin I will not lose. 'Benjamin, my youngest adorer, return.' I will talk to Mr. Ellsworth another time, but I must tell Benjamin something which is burning to be said."

Benjamin sank in a helpless heap at her feet, and, after a half-apologetic glance at Clifford Ellsworth, she turned

the full battery of her attractions upon the flaxen-haired youth.

Clifford Ellsworth was not a vain man, but even his normal amount of self-esteem was wounded. He had been attracted by the grace and beauty of Miss Blair, and the fact that every other man in the room found her fascinating enough to neglect the rest of her sex, if not openly, at least in spirit, made her seem no less charming. A man desires to lead in every other path in life except that which ends at a woman's shrine; there he is content to become one of a procession, and the longer the line which precedes him, the more devout his worship. Possibly, what is often called feminine vanity may be found to be merely a desire to provide Prince Charming with a suitable escort.

He took his dismissal without show of feeling, but with a certain wonder, so vague that it could hardly be qualified in any class. He stepped back and rejoined Mary Felton with a smile.

"Now that you have done your duty as hostess, that you have deliberately and vainly tried to get rid of me, perhaps you will be good."

His lips said little, his eyes everything. He did not leave her side again during the evening. One by one, the men who had been driven away from Miss Blair returned, reinforced from time to time by others, but he did not again look in her direction. His allegiance, momentarily wandering, had returned to Mary Felton, and before the evening was over, he had entirely forgotten that Inez Blair was present.

When they said good night, Mrs. Green put her firm arms about the girl's neck.

"I am an old woman, and I am more often wrong than right. Perhaps you did well, after all; you will not be anxious now. You see, there is absolutely no attraction on either side. I was watching. Everything is a matter of affinity—temperament. You could bring them together a thousand times and the result would be the same.

"I am going to-morrow; when I

return, I hope it will be to see you the wife of Clifford Ellsworth—that is my dearest hope. Do not disappoint me."

Mary Felton was not entirely satisfied with the experiment. It was possible, as Mrs. Green declared, that she might bring them together a thousand times, without altering their relation, but she doubted. She was too candid herself to be able to trace all the subtleties of other women's cleverness, so called. She knew that Inez had methods which she used in the manipulation of men's attentions and admirations. She did not consider that a past-mistress in the art of coquetry would not resort to such an overworked plan as indifference to gain her end. She believed that Inez's attitude was assumed as a preliminary to other tactics. She knew her well enough to be certain that she would allow no man of Clifford Ellsworth's abilities to remain blind to her power. In this creed she brought them together frequently, leaving them for tête-à-têtes, praising them one to the other. Pride, suspicion and doubt, the inseparable companions, were her teachers, and she was an apt pupil. She was not successful. Over and over again, she arranged her plans which were foiled by the permanent apathy of Inez Blair, which acted like an ice-cold bath on any enthusiasm which Clifford Ellsworth might have displayed in happier conditions. She did this delicately, and at last Mary Felton was convinced. There was no fault of the amateur in Inez's acting, no exaggeration, no forgetfulness. She deceived everybody but herself.

Clifford Ellsworth represented to Inez more than any man had for a half-decade, partly because he possessed the sum total of qualities which she had secretly selected for her ideal; partly because he was forbidden fruit, and it was not in her nature to deny herself. She stood her ground firmly. Her promise had been given, and although it had been drawn from her in a moment when she was off guard, it was no less a promise for that. In her easy creed of life, there was but one

standard of ethics. To her the broken word, the broken faith, was impossible. This was partly her inheritance, partly the teaching of a widowed father who had endeavored to inculcate in his only child the manly virtues as he understood them. Even in her many love-affairs, Inez was true to her standard, and no one of her adorers could claim that she had promised more than she had fulfilled.

For a long time, Mary Felton could not believe that her good fortune was real. She had feared so much from the test to which she had submitted Clifford Ellsworth. In her pride was a certain humility; in her jealousy an overweening modesty. She did not rate her own attractions at their proper value, rating her rival's too high. It was only after repeated failures, after meetings arranged with careful purpose, from which Clifford Ellsworth returned to her gladly, and from which Inez departed without backward look of regret, after half a hundred failures, that she dared breathe freely.

So Mrs. Green was right after all. She had not thrown them together a thousand times, but times enough to show that what her older friend had stated was true—there was apparently no affinity of temperament.

She could and would be herself again, throw off the slight veil of restraint which she had worn of late, face the future gladly. He had stood the supreme test of feminine attraction; no other woman he would ever meet and know could display such an equipment of allurements as Inez Blair.

It was during this transfiguration of sentiment that he said to Mary one night—they were standing alone in a secluded corner at a ball—"I am tired of wearing the curb bit."

"What do you mean," she asked, then her eyes fell.

"You know what I mean." His words were gentle but there was underlying strength. "I have waited patiently. I want my reward."

Mary's aunt with whom she had lived since she was orphaned, who had for years been a chaperon in spirit

rather than in letter, was now numbering her days. She refused to believe the unfailing symptom of her disease, and insisted upon Mary fulfilling her social duties. The news of the engagement seemed to bring her an aftermath of vitality, and, to the surprise of the physician, nurse and friends, she rallied in the warm Spring days, and spent her hours devising details of what she had determined should be the conventional wedding, bridesmaids, orange-blossoms and the rest. She viewed the engagement with satisfaction only equaled by that of Mrs. Green, who wrote voluminous letters of congratulation daily from her country home.

Mary humored her aunt to an extent, but she would not make her engagement public—to her she excused this on the ground that she wished to be happy a little while without espionage—to herself and her fiancé she admitted that she would not invite congratulation with death so near. Besides Mrs. Green, only one woman was taken into her confidence—Inez Blair. They had made promises in school days that each should know of the other's troth as soon as it was made. The days of the secret engagement were happy ones, filled with the joy which comes from love's security, rendered mysterious, spiritual, by the shadow encompassing them. Death, so near, seemed to whisper of love's incompleteness, love of life's immortality.

Mary Felton loved deeply, just as she had feared deeply, as she had distrusted deeply. There was no room in her character for half qualities.

She had finished, so she believed, with the dark side of love; to some it comes late, to others early—her future seemed to stretch before her in the high, white light of safety.

Never in the years to come would she doubt Clifford Ellsworth. Other women would come into his life, it is true, for they lived in a world where the marriage vow is lightly held and where the soul's infidelity is a jest. She was sure of him, as she could not have been had she taken measures to prevent his meeting and knowing Inez

Blair, as so many women might have done. She had faced a situation which had required all her nerve, all her resources of patience and audacity. It seemed to her that she had played the braver part.

One day, she and Inez were sitting in the library together, when Mary's lover came. It was one of his unexpected visits which always delighted her more than the stereotyped ones of habit or appointment. She accompanied him to the door after his brief call, and they chatted a moment in the hall. When she returned, she ran up the stairs lightly, her soft footfalls making no distinct sound on the thick rugs. Inez was standing at the window looking into the street, watching intently the departing figure, one hand was dragging back the heavy folds of the curtain so that she could see more clearly; in the other, she held a book she had taken from the near-by table. Suddenly she flung the volume to the floor, and crushed it violently with her foot. "Fool, fool, fool," she said distinctly, through tightly closed teeth, "an old woman's promise"—again she ejaculated "fool," and again she pushed the book with disdainful touch. Then the mood passed, and she stooped to pick it up; it was while she was in this attitude that Mary Felton stole unnoticed from the room, and, exhausted by a sudden fear, an unexplainable, choking sensation, sat for a moment on the stairs, leaning her head wearily against the rail to recover.

Promise! What promise? Why was she a fool? Why should watching Clifford Ellsworth's departure affect a woman who was so controlled, so sure of herself as Inez Blair?

A maid's footsteps fluttered down the stairs toward her. "Come, Miss Mary, at once! Your aunt is calling—hurry!"

It was while Death was master of the house, Death, who unlocks the secret recesses of thought and soul, that the explanation of the riddle came to her. Worn by suffering and by watching, her senses acutely sensitive, she saw clearly the scheme in which she had been the dupe.

It was no idle coincidence that she had overheard Inez's exclamation, for there is no such thing as idle coincidence in the unpitying law of life, the letter with its betraying secret, the overheard exclamation, the sudden return—they are all subservient agents to this spiritual law.

She remembered the words of one who had recognized and written of this:

It is vain to attempt to keep a secret from one who has a right to know it—that mood in which a friend can bring us in his dominion over us. To the thoughts of that mood he has a right. All the secrets of that state of mind he can compel.

She had unknowingly forced the secret from Inez—that was all, in answer to this fundamental rule. What matter the manner of its betrayal; it was sure to be, soon or late.

Step by step, she retraced the path; she could see clearly now. It was, of course, Mrs. Green, who, in mistaken faith, had betrayed her. She thought once of writing to her, then thrust the thought aside. It was too late—and of what importance were the details when she had the fact in her possession?

This was the meaning of Inez's seeming apathy. She was under promise to hold herself in check, not to exert her fascination for fear of robbing her friend of her one possession.

What a position for a proud woman to be placed in! What an outrage to her sensibilities! Mary felt that she was holding a man's faith and affections on sufferance—that was what it amounted to. There was another woman who had the right to say, "it is only by my forbearance that this is possible; it is only because I have rendered myself a negative force that you can enjoy your positive happiness."

It was an intolerable situation for any woman, but for her whose pride was so great, it was doubly so. She was receiving a gift from Inez Blair—the gift of the future, and the knowledge of that would be ever present, a kill-joy to every feast, the cloud in her sky shadowing enjoyment.

She knew Inez Blair well; she knew

her faults as well as her virtues. If she had once given her word, she would keep it, for she had an unusual steadfastness of purpose under seeming superficiality. Moreover, she was too subtle to be entangled in any web where she would have to admit her artificial attitude in order to free herself.

She could not contend with Inez in cleverness, that she realized. There was but one thing she could do to release herself from the present perplexity. It was only by this direct method she could be true to herself. She would do it at once, before time and inclination together should strive to weaken her resolve. She would break her engagement with Clifford Ellsworth. With one word, she would free them both, her lover from his vows, her friend from the promise unduly exacted from her. She could not accept her happiness on its present weakly-based foundation, and no other solution to the problem presented itself to her.

She announced her determination to Clifford Ellsworth by letter. She did not dare trust herself in a personal interview. She stated simply that she had changed her mind—the woman's privilege. She begged him not to attempt to alter her new viewpoint by personal suasion. She did not say that she had ceased to love him, but so far as indefinite words may be made to serve a definite purpose, she conveyed to him the unalterable nature of her convictions.

Her intuition told her that he would disobey; that he would not be satisfied with her evasive letter, so, in order to avoid meeting him, she left town and took refuge with Mrs. Green, to whom she announced only the fact of her broken faith without assigning any reason. One other person she told, Inez Blair, as she was the only other friend who had known positively of her engagement.

Such a course of procedure in a woman governed completely by her own emotions would have been impossible. To such a one, mere possession would

have answered all questions and all unhappiness. There would have been moments of doubt, but these would have been more than balanced by the joy of a certain tie. In Mary Felton there was a finer sense. The mere bond meant nothing to her unless it were indicative of the bond of the spirit. To know that Clifford Ellsworth might some time find Inez Blair with the mask of indifference removed, might too late become hopelessly enthralled, and then resent the vow that held him, was a possibility she could not face.

At the country home of Mrs. Green, she awaited developments in the callousness of feeling which comes as the reaction from decision.

The finality of her action, as outlined to Inez Blair, gave to the latter the freedom which she had long desired in regard to Clifford Ellsworth. She had resented her hastily given promise, she had desired to test his attraction by the agent of her own. The mere fact that she had been prevented from so doing, enveloped him with a greater interest than he would otherwise have possessed. For the first time in her life, Inez Blair gave herself up to the force of an emotional experience.

Clifford Ellsworth came to her immediately. She was the only one who knew of his engagement and its rupture. She had possessed no particular attraction in the days of his engagement, he had looked upon her merely as a friend of his fiancée, without individual cataloguing in his scheme of life. He found in her now a woman who had new meanings for him to read, new allurements for his undoing. He was humiliated, wounded, astray; she soothed him, understood him, focussed his wandering spirit.

He wrote many times to Mary Felton. He begged her again and again with protestations, with prayers, with a strange lack of pride which was alien to his character and traditions. All to no avail. Her purpose, the reason of which remained sealed, was unchanged by his eloquence, and, at last, even his letters were unanswered.

By her own act, Mary Felton had meshed herself in a web of intricacies. Had she done wisely? She did not know, but, given the same circumstances, she felt that she must have done the same. Thought, grief and fear led her to no other possible solution. Sometimes she was on the point of writing and explaining all, then something restrained her; it would do no good to go over the same ground again; his faith renewed could give her no permanence of belief, excepting as he was able to understand the path she had chosen.

One day, she received a note from Inez Blair, announcing her engagement to Clifford Ellsworth. It was half apologetic in tone, wholly triumphant. She read it with emotion. It is the expected that hurts most.

The days that followed had no remembrance. There was but one dominant thought, that she had done well. Her suspicions, it seemed, were rightly founded, she would have lost him eventually, and the mere fact that she was his wife would have made the loss but the more severely felt.

The engagement of Inez Blair and Clifford Ellsworth, published immediately, made a great stir. She was an advertised beauty, he, a man of achievement and promise. The wedding was to be a fashionable function, and the papers were filled with daily paragraphs of truths and half-truths concerning it.

Six weeks elapsed between the date of the announcement and that set for its consummation. To Mary Felton these days passed as in a dream. Mrs. Green, after her first irritability and wonder, wisely forbore comment, and left her to her own communings.

These led her, as the day of the wedding approached, to a sudden decision. She was impelled to the city. She felt that she must be there, breathing again the same air with him. The distance of the intervening miles seemed all at once intolerable.

The chill air of the early Spring crept through the house, untenanted so

long save by the caretakers, and oppressed her anew with physical fears. It was the wedding eve and, by a strange coincidence, was the anniversary of her aunt's death. Well-lighted rooms and the open fire could not dispel the gloom. She walked restlessly up and down.

The curtains at the door swung backward with a quick motion, and she went slowly toward him.

She knew now why she had returned; she had expected this.

He wasted no time in preliminaries. He was very pale, and there were lines in his face to which she was a stranger.

"I was walking by the house," he said, hesitatingly. "I walk by it frequently. I saw the lights and I knew you had returned."

She tried to regain control of the floods of feeling which were sweeping her away.

"Why did you do it?" he asked, and took her hands, unresisting, in his.

"You know I love you!" How far away his voice seemed! "To me you have been the only one. How cruel you were! Why did you do it?"

He crushed her hands together, hurting her, then, loosing them, walked away. For a few moments he paced restlessly back and forth.

"I have no right to ask you, perhaps. I should accept your evasions, your silences. But always I have been haunted by the belief that in some way I failed you. I want to know how it was. I want you to forgive me if it is true. I tried. It is hard for a man to read a woman; sometimes he hurts her when he only means to worship."

Still she was silent; there was a physical reason. It seemed to her that there were sinewy fingers gripping her throat. She could not for the life of her articulate a sound.

"To-morrow," his voice faltered, "you know what happens, to-morrow. There is only one thing to take into the new life, only one fact that will have importance in its unimportance—that I did not fail you. That it was your wish that prompted you to ruin my

life, not my weakness. I could not stand that."

The invisible fingers seemed to loosen their grip.

"You did not fail me—at first."

"At first? When did I fail? It is all a riddle." He smoothed his brow with a tired gesture. "Tell me—it is the last time; talk to me as you would have talked to me in the old days."

Then she told him the pitiful story. How trivial it seemed repeating it, how impossible to make another understand the agonies of doubt and suspicion from which she had suffered! How banal it seemed to her now that she had staked her life's happiness in such a way! To him it was incredible. Yet, banal, weak and ineffective as it sounded, she could not rid herself of the knowledge that she could not have acted differently.

He led her to a dim corner.

"Listen. To-morrow Inez Blair is to become my wife for better or for worse—you know the formula. To-night is the last night I shall live, afterward I shall just go on, as so many of my fellows do, bravely, I hope, hiding my true self, becoming little by little careless, indifferent; unmoved by the events of the hours which only love can illumine and arrange in the proper perspective.

"I never loved Inez. When we first met, I was attracted by her wonderful beauty, by her grace and charm. Any man susceptible to those qualities, must have been. Afterward, I thought little of her. When a man is in love, there is the one woman and the other woman—she was in the latter

class. When you refused to see me, to listen to my prayers, I saw her again. She was transformed. Where once there had been nothing, there were sympathy and affection. I had drifted until I saw you. You do not know, dear, what it is for a man to drift, and most of us do until we meet the one woman who can anchor us. I believed then that the days of shifting winds and currents were over. Then I was made to drift again. But with this difference: before, there was Hope at the helm, now the ship was pilotless. It was the difference between drifting on Summer seas, and in the night on a chartless ocean. I was going toward sure shipwreck. It was then that Inez came. There has been no unfaith to you in my soul. My life was broken, I tried to take its fragments and piece them together, that is all."

She remembered the night her aunt had died; she had felt the unseen nearness of Death, not as a vague, intangible idea, but as a conscious presence. She remembered how, in that holy hour that preceded the confessional, she had felt this Presence drawing them together until at last, as their hands were enfolded, life had fled.

In the long-untenanted house were strange influences, in the chill of the unused air, in the mysterious driftings of the light draperies, in the weird silences, she realized again the Uninvited Guest, and, as in the dim corner, she felt the lingering touches of her lover, she knew again the agony of an eternal separation.



A THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

"PAPA, is hell right down underneath?"

"Certainly, my boy. I hope you haven't any doubts about it."

"Well, you know, papa, I don't see how it can be there, when it has been raised so many times."

A GAME OF LETTERS

By Marjorie A. Barkley

"WELL, of all things!" said the literary girl as she dropped into her desk-chair, "here's that story, the third that the Boyd Syndicate has returned this month."

She opened the long envelope with her paper-knife, and sniffed disdainfully at the printed slip that fluttered from among the type-written pages, and fell, face up, on her desk. Below the usual complimentary regrets, this was scrawled:

"Too bad, but don't be discouraged. Send me short, spicy love stories. This is too long. "D."

The girl smiled as she re-read it several times, then, taking her pen, she wrote on blue note-paper:

PHILADELPHIA.

To "D":

Many thanks for your postscript. The short, spicy love story will soon be in process of evolution. Do not forget me in the meantime.

DELLA HUNT.

P. S.—They tell me that you are a woman. Otherwise—you understand.

D. H.

March the tenth.

NEW YORK, March 12.

MISS HUNT:

We await your story with interest. Considering its creator, we feel that it ought to crackle with crispness.

D.

PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR D:

Your compliment is doubtful, but, remembering your sex, I do not won-

der. You really should have been a man.

The story is progressing slowly.

DELLA HUNT.

March the seventeenth.

NEW YORK, March 18.

Thank you, your compliment isn't doubtful for it happens that I am a man. Send the story on when it's ready.

D.

PHILADELPHIA.

TO THE BOYD SYNDICATE, New York:

Enclosed is a "short, spicy story," which I submit for your inspection.

I thank you in advance for any attention you may give it.

Sincerely,

DELLA HUNT.

March the thirty-first.

NEW YORK, April 15.

MISS HUNT:

Dear Madam: Enclosed find cheque for ten dollars. Your story is crisp and clever.

BOYD SYNDICATE.

P. S.—Please notice that the cheque I send you is much more desirable than the one you gave me. Isn't it too bad that nice girls can't be just a little gamey?

D.

PHILADELPHIA.

To D:

Many thanks for the cheque. Believe me, I am a little gamey. Isn't it deplorable that gamey men can't be nice?

I'm writing another story.

DELLA HUNT.

April the sixteenth.

NEW YORK, April 17.

I shall hope to see the new story.

Do you ever come to New York?
Any policeman can tell you where to
find Park Row.

D.

PHILADELPHIA.

Yes, I often visit New York. I can
find Park Row, but how ridiculous I'd
feel when I asked at the Boyd Syndi-
cate for "D."

DELLA HUNT.

April the twentieth.

NEW YORK, April 22.

DEAR MISS HUNT:

I beg your pardon for neglecting to
give you my name. Enclosed is my
card. When you come to New York,
will you lunch or dine with me?

Very truly,

JOHN DRAKE.

PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR MR. DRAKE:

Thank you for your card, and the
thoughtful invitation. Mr. Hunt and
I shall make the trip together, and we
shall be happy to have you dine with
us.

Sincerely,

DELLA HUNT.

April the twenty-fifth.

NEW YORK, April 27.

DEAR MRS. HUNT:

It is I who must thank you. Per-
haps you and your husband would en-
joy a little dinner in our home. My
wife will consider your acceptance a
great favor.

Cordially,

JOHN DRAKE.

PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR MR. DRAKE:

We leave on Tuesday for your city,
and we feel that to meet you and Mrs.
Drake will be a great privilege.

You really must not address me as
Mrs. Hunt. Harrison Hunt, Prince-
ton '99, is my brother, you know. He
often tells me of his classmate, Jack
Drake. Is Mrs. Drake your sister?

Sincerely,

DELLA HUNT.

April the thirtieth.

NEW YORK, May 1.

MY DEAR MISS HUNT:

This certainly is the finest surprise I
ever experienced. So you are old
"Happy Harrison's" sister. I might
have known it, but I confess that I did
not associate the two names at all.
Needless to say, I am doubly anxious
to meet you now.

Have Harrison telegraph the time
and place of your arrival, and I will
meet you. So you knew who I was all
along? In that case I must, I suppose,
answer to the grave charge of flirting.

"Mrs. Drake" isn't my sister. She's
fiction. The laugh, and incidentally
the dinner, are both on me.

In eager anticipation,

JOHN DRAKE.

Two years later

VENICE, Italy.

DEAR HARRISON:

We have just reached our hotel.
Italy is full of just the color that we
need for the new novel; we only want
time to absorb it.

More anon. Jack sends love.

Yours ever,

DELLA HUNT DRAKE.

P. S.—Doesn't the new name look
nice?

D. D.



OF all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: "Where have you been?"

THE LOVE OF MR. BING DANG

By Margaret A. Klein

SIX years after his ninth birthday, any one who did not know might have supposed Willie Norris—our baby friend, Mr. Bing Dang—to be at least eighteen years of age. He was not large; he was rather thin and pale, yet there was a man-of-the-world air about him which made him seem older than he actually was. So it is with many city boys, the kind for whom the old rhyme was made:

I can shoot a musket,
I can smoke a pipe;
I can kiss a pretty girl
At ten o'clock at night.

Willie was just beginning to notice the girls, and to drink in the wisdom of the other fellows who told of their "affairs" and "cases," with "Hang it, man, that girl broke me all up!" or, "Devil take it, I wish she hadn't made mesay that!" or, "Gosh, fellows, if you'd only seen her when I told her how I felt!" or, despairingly, "Darn it, I just made a fool of myself!"

Mr. Bing Dang had begun to notice girls. One day when he was out on his wheel, he crossed Columbus avenue, and stepped into a little candy shop near the corner to get a box of jujubes. A box of jujubes! Weeks later, he flew into a rage, and wanted the chambermaid dismissed because that box, which, empty and smashed, was the chief treasure on his chiffonier, had been thrown away in cleaning his room.

For weeks, Mr. Bing Dang thought that in this candy shop he had met his fate. The "fate" was a plump, fair girl, with a bang curled on the tongs. She had sold him the jujubes.

The next day, he felt the need of

more sweets, so he went into the shop, and began by asking how much peppermints were by the pound. As if he did not know! But his "fate" answered him so politely, and he went on inquiring the price of so many kinds of candy, that, when he came finally to the peanut brittle, and she asked if he would not have some of that, he rashly, in his confusion, took two pounds, and rode away on his wheel with the bag in one hand. A great joy seemed to possess him, and he threw all the candy to the squirrels in the Park, and rode round and round all the cycle paths till it was dinner-time.

Again, the next day, Willie went back to the shop, and this time he asked instantly for a half-pound of chocolates. Other customers were there, and he had no chance to linger. The girl looked at him as she handed the box across the counter, but she did not seem to recognize him. This gave Mr. Bing Dang a peculiar feeling of disappointment. He ate the chocolates himself, with one of the fellows who dropped in that evening.

"Pretty good, aren't they?"

"Fair, Bing. No, no more, thanks, old man."

Bing himself ate the rest. He thought them unusually fine, better even than the candy he had often bought at the best places. He slipped the box into the waste-basket lest his friend should see where it came from, and go there for something himself. No doubt, he was merely feigning indifference to the quality of the chocolates—sly rogue!—when he said they were only fair. Bing had resolved

not to tell any of the boys about this girl in the shop; at least, he would not talk about her until he knew her better.

And to know her better Bing went to the shop for many a pound of chocolates, marshmallows, nougatines, fancy mixed, or glacé nuts. Jujubes he bought no more; they were sacred to that first day.

During his earlier visits, the girl put these things up mechanically for the new customer; soon she began to notice him, then to look for him every day. Once, she stood with a blue ribbon bow in her hair, and smiled as he came in at the door, and again when she asked him what he would have. He would have had the whole shop that day, or at least a five-pound box of something; but it was the end of the month, and his allowance was short. He bought only a pound of the peanut brittle. This time, it was put in a box, and the squirrels shared it with him in the Park, where he sat a long time, until the three squirrels which had been eating from his hands had scampered away. Then, he remembered that he had promised to meet one of the fellows, and go for a ride. So, he had to hurry home, order up the horse, get into his togs, and be on the way.

Bing did not get to the shop in Columbus avenue as often as he wished. He had lessons to do, because the bore of college was ahead of him, and there were all sorts of other things to claim his attention; besides, it was not always easy to get away from his companions.

By this time, though, he knew that the girl's name was Flora. He had heard her mother call her that. Her mother was too often in the shop, Bing thought. She generally wore a flowered cotton wrapper, with a white apron tied round her waist to confine its folds about her ample person. She seemed to be the head of things, and to this day Bing does not know if Flora had a father living or dead. Her mother was obstacle enough for him. Sometimes, when he would get a

chance to go in, he would see her there sewing alone, and he would retreat hastily, thinking she had not seen him.

Once, Bing, who had not seen Flora for what seemed to him a long while, was out walking with his chum. Despite Bing's many hints, Van kept at his side. Finally, rather than miss for another day a glimpse of the lovely girl, Bing decided that he would take Van into the shop, and see what he thought of Flora's surpassing beauty. Perhaps, he could tell Van how matters stood with him. Van was safe, for he himself was infatuated with a brilliant, dark-eyed woman, who was a distant cousin of his, and old enough to have been his mother if she had married young.

So, Bing led his friend by the place, and said, quite casually, "Come in, old man, and let's have some chocolates."

"This place?" said Van, looking about.

"Oh, it's all right; come in." And Bing led the way. But he had scarcely passed the threshold when he suddenly turned and almost darted for the street.

"Lord, man, it's the old woman! Break away!"

"What do you mean? What's up?" asked Van; but there was no explanation from Mr. Bing Dang.

It was not long before Bing's love had ripened so that he felt he must show it in some other way than by going in and staring at Flora, and asking for a pound of this or a half-pound of that. So, one day, he took her a dozen bridesmaid's roses.

"For me?" she cried, as he handed them to her. "They're lovely!" And she glanced up and blushed, and he looked across the counter at her a long while without saying anything, till a little girl rattled her pennies against the glass case, with, "Pleath give me two tenth worth of gum drophth." They both started, and Mr. Bing Dang blushed, and went out without buying anything.

Another day, he took her violets—a two-dollar bunch with a purple rib-

bon, which cost extra, tied round them. She was busy when he went in, but her mother was not to be seen; so he waited, drumming on the case over a box of candied cherries. By-and-bye, all the people went out, and Flora and he were alone.

"I brought you these," said Bing, handing her the violets.

"Thank you; they're beautiful."

"Won't you put them on? There's a long pin with them."

"I believe I will. Aren't they sweet?"

"Are they? Let me smell them." And the artful Bing leaned over close to her to catch their fragrance.

"They are nice; but not so nice and pretty as some things I know."

"Candies, you mean? You seem to like them." She dimpled and blushed, and he looked down and cleared his throat to speak.

"Oh, confound it!" he said, under his breath, for just then an old gentleman and two little girls came in the shop. Bing went off, muttering to himself. "Don't see why all these idiot people want to eat so much of that nasty sweet stuff. Why don't they keep out of that place, and let a fellow have a little peace? That's what I'd like to know."

He walked up the avenue impatiently, and after a long while he found himself on the heights overlooking Morningside Park. He leaned against the railing, and gazed down. It was late in the afternoon of a mild February day. Workmen were clipping the shrubs along the borders of the driveway on the slope below him. The gloom of evening was settling over the city, and the lights of the houses across the Park began to glimmer through the dusk.

Bing had noticed nothing in particular till these lights called him from his reverie.

"Oh, hang it all!" said he; "what's a fellow to do?" Then, he went rapidly down the hill, took a Columbus-avenue car, and got off at the door of Flora's shop.

The girl was alone this time, in the

back of the place, looking at herself in a little mirror there.

"Oh," she said, as he came in, "it's you, is it?"

"Yes. Oh, I say, why can't I see you some time? I'd like to, awfully. Can't I meet you somewhere? Can't we fix it? I can't see anything of you here, you know."

"No," said Flora, quietly, with a glance at both the front and back door; "but we could go to walk somewhere."

"Say, could we? When? Where shall I meet you?"

Then, they arranged to meet the next Sunday afternoon at four o'clock, at the Eighty-fifth-street entrance to the Park. Flora was supposed to go over to see her aunt on the East Side at that time, but she could call there later, or give up the visit altogether, and her mother need not know.

They met. Flora really looked rather pretty in her Sunday-afternoon finery, and Bing wondered how it was a girl could make him feel so strange when she looked at him.

There still were patches of snow on the ground here and there, but it was a sunny afternoon, and the air was almost Springlike. There was an old gentleman out in his wheel-chair; a baby was asleep in its carriage while its nurse gossiped with a friend; men sat around on benches, and smoked; and boys and girls played games with one another, or sped about on roller-skates. At the duck-pond, Bing and Flora stopped to watch the swans and ducks and geese, some standing or sitting on the ice, others swimming where the ice had broken away, quacking softly now and then, each in its peculiar fashion.

Farther up, on the banks of a little stream, they lingered a while.

"Look!" said Flora; "those are coming out already!" And she pointed to the catkins hanging in brown tassels from the bushes by the water.

"That's a sign Spring is coming, isn't it?"

"I guess so. Don't you want to sit down? I'm tired."

"So am I. We'll sit here on this bench."

The sun had gone too far down to reach that spot. It was damp under the trees and getting colder, but neither Bing nor Flora heeded. Both were silent for a long while.

"Say," said Bing, at last, "I don't suppose you could love a fellow, could you?"

"Well, maybe I could," answered Flora, and she nestled up to him.

"Oh, could you, though?" and he kissed her several times. A policeman loomed up in the distance. Both felt chilly at once and rose to go.

Flora went as quickly as she could over to her aunt's, and found her mother waiting there for her. She had never before come to meet her, and all that she said was, "Herman has come back and will be at the house to-night."

Bing walked home, whistling most of the time. That night, he worked out all the problems in his algebra lesson for the next day.

It was nearly a week before he saw Flora again. He did go by the shop once, but only her mother stood behind the counter, and he passed on. The next time he looked in, Flora was alone. He entered hastily, slipped something into her hand, squeezing it as he did so, and went out without saying a word.

Flora peeped into the tiny white box. On a bed of pink cotton, there was a brooch of forget-me-nots enameled in blue, each flower with a tiny pearl in the centre. Bing had received his month's allowance that morning.

"Let me see that what you have there," said Flora's mother, entering the shop from the back door at that moment. "What I told you now, eh? Give it to me!" And Flora handed it to her.

It seemed to Bing after this that he would never have a chance again to see Flora alone. Either her mother was serving in the shop when he went by, or there were customers there, or Flora and her mother were both behind the counter. The less chance he had of

seeing her, the more he loved her, and the more he wished to take her to walk and to kiss her again. Finally, he went in one day when her mother was there waiting on a customer. Flora came forward to him.

"I'll take a pound of those," said Bing, pointing to the candied cherries. When he got his parcel, he handed back a little note folded in the dollar-bill he gave in payment:

Will you meet me same time, same place, next Sunday?

He thought she said yes as she gave him his change. He reached the door. The other customer passed him going out. Then, Bing heard a harsh voice: "Young man, I have something to say with you."

He turned. Flora's mother was glaring at him. Poor Bing Dang! And, to make matters worse, Flora, at a nod from the older woman, passed out the back way, closing the door behind her.

"Young man, it may be you are not much more than a kid, and don't know no better. But, if you come here to buy, all right; we sell you what we've got to sell, and you go when you have buy. But it is not so, I think, that we have much what you want to buy."

Bing dropped his parcel on the counter. Flora's mother went on: "What I tell you that is not for sale is my Flora. Maybe, she told you she is engaged already to nice fellow what is house-painter by big contractors. Next month, she gets married already, if you keep away and she get her senses back and not spoil her chances before that time come."

"Well, ah—good day, madam," said Bing. And he went out hastily, leaving the box of candied cherries behind him. He could not remember exactly what he had said, but he had a notion that he had acted in rather a manly fashion. So he had. No man could have closed the affair in better style. He knew he was defeated, and surrendered unconditionally.

That evening, he smoked out a pack of cigarettes, and lighted his pipe, and put his feet up on his study-table.

Van came in about ten o'clock.

"Hello, Bing!" he said; "what's up?"

"By George, old fellow, when a man's been in love and been knocked out of the ring, well—" And he proceeded to tell Van all about it.

"And you think she was pretty, old man?"

"Oh, well, kind of. Awful poor stuff that candy was; 'most upset my stomach. And the old woman! Well, you saw her. Whew!"



A FAINT HEART

HE looked too long at her. A-thrall
Unto her whims both light and wise,
Her face in dreams he could recall;
He looked too long.

He breathed his passion in his sighs,
But not one word could e'er let fall.
Such silence caused her great surprise.

At last, one day, he told it all—
But told too late. She raised her eyes;
By waiting thinned, he loomed so tall,
He looked—too long!

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.



MOTHER HUBBARD IN NEW YORK

OLD MOTHER HUBBARD started to get up and give her poor dog a bone, when there was a sharp ring at the door, and the janitor appeared.

"No dogs here!" he said, sternly.

"But," said Mother Hubbard, "I was only going to the cupboard."

"Cupboard!" yelled the janitor, as he threw the dog out the window.

"That, madam, is one of the roomiest rooms in the flat!"



THE ONLY CURE

BRIGGS—There's no use. I can't make love to that girl and attend to my business.

GRIGGS—What are you going to do—marry her?

IF JUNE WERE MINE

IF June were mine, I'd weave for you—
 Of roses red and skies of blue,
 Of golden sun and orchard sheen,
 Of blossom-fretted damascene—
 A veil of every petal-hue.

And from the morning mists of dew
 Distil a fairy stream, that through
 The woods should wend a way serene,
 If June were mine.

And, e'er the purple dusk anew
 The curtains of the sunset drew,
 Adown the river's dream demesne,
 I'd paint a path incarnadine,
 And drift into the dawn with you,
 If June were mine.

CHESTER FIRKINS.



TIMES CHANGE

BRIGGS—It's a funny thing about morality and how it changes with every age. At one time it was immoral for a man to kiss his wife on Sunday.
 GRIGGS—And now it's simply tiresome.



A SPECULATION

CLARA—Sadie is going to marry that old chap who has been refused by all the insurance companies.
 MAUD—That's the reason why she accepted him.



FIRST PEACH—We seem about to be preserved.
 SECOND PEACH—Yes. Wouldn't it jar you!

NEW FRIENDS AND OLD

By A. M. Chisholm

"SHE flirts disgracefully," said Florrie.

"I thought she did it rather well," said I, incautiously.

A coal fire blazed merrily. Tiny white spurts of smoke flung outward from the grate, and jets of gas, burned blue as the flame, lapped them. It was very comfortable in Florrie's sitting-room, after a struggle with a car service badly demoralized by the first severe storm of the Winter. Back of the low-lying circle of light thrown by the shaded lamp were well-filled book-cases, draped with some soft material pendent from brass rods shining in the firelight. A piano occupied one corner, and a writing-desk, broad and flat, which also served the purpose of a work-table, had its place near the white-curtained window. A cozy-corner, heaped with soft, well-used cushions, was to the right of the fireplace. A banjo, photographs and pictures adorned the walls, and the mantelpiece was covered with small, fragile articles of pottery and statuary, whose names I had often vainly tried to remember. The room was thoroughly feminine, but the big easy-chairs were masculine and full of comfort. Also, permission to smoke might be had by good behavior.

Into this pleasant haven crept dissension. My last remark was ill-considered, and immediately led me into difficulties.

"Perhaps you have had opportunities for observation?" suggested Florrie, in a dangerously gentle way.

I disclaimed, hastily. "Not at all. I have only met her once or twice. If I remember correctly, I was in-

troduced to her one night last Summer at the boat club."

"You danced with her," Florrie asserted.

"I did not," said I, virtuously.

"Then you sat out with her."

"Not exactly."

"What did you do?" demanded Florrie, browbeating the witness.

"Well," I admitted, reluctantly, "it was fairly simmering under that gravel roof, so, just to get cool, we took a canoe and paddled out a little way. The music sounds much nicer from the water."

Florrie nodded her blond head in severe comprehension. She possesses a cultivated taste in musical and other matters. The case for the defense, however, suffered thereby.

"What did you do then?"

"Then? Oh, nothing! She dabbled her hands in the water, and I smoked."

"Was it moonlight?" pursued Florrie, relentlessly.

"Let me see. Yes, there was a moon."

"Ah! And, of course, you paddled around the bay to the river."

Florrie would have made a great success as a cross-examiner.

"Yes, we went that far," I admitted.

"Didn't you go up the river?"

"I think we did—a little way."

"Up the right bank, where the trees droop over?" suggested counsel, insinuatingly.

"There is less current by the right bank," I explained, endeavoring to make the admission as little damaging as possible.

"And there is more shadow. Did she call it heavenly?"

"I believe she liked the scenery."

"I have no doubt of it. Did you tell her you found an added beauty in it that night?"

Counsel, now convinced of the reluctance of the witness, was pressing the question. Also, counsel's technical knowledge was beyond dispute.

"I said I liked the place; so I do."

"When she 'dabbled her hands,' as you call it, did she roll up her sleeves?"

"She couldn't very well let them get wet."

"Then she did roll them up. Did you say anything about moonlight and white arms?"

"Well, they were white."

"Did you take her hand?"

"How could I? I was paddling," said I, in excuse. "You know how it is in a canoe—so tottlish. You can't do what——"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," interrupted Florrie, with severity. "She was flirting shamelessly, and you were worse, if anything. I do not want to hear any more. If you must flirt with every girl who is silly enough to listen to you, at least don't tell me about it."

"Why, you asked me what happened."

"I did not think so much happened."

"Absolutely nothing happened," said I, regretfully. "Circumstances beyond my control made it necessary to go back. She said she couldn't stay away from her aunt any longer, and certainly the old lady looked relieved when we got in safely from what she called 'that treacherous canoe.'"

"I should think she would," said Florrie, unkindly.

I looked at her, reflectively.

"Then," said I, "I went to look for you."

"That was very good of you," observed Florrie, with sarcasm.

"I couldn't find you," I proceeded.

"Carson told me you and some chap had strolled down toward the cliff beach." I surprised a somewhat thoughtful expression in Florrie's eyes. "So I followed, to say that Mrs. Digby

was looking for you. When I got down under the bluff, I saw a lady and gentleman seated there, apparently much interested in each other."

Florrie became slightly red.

"Of course," said I, "I came away at once."

Florrie looked relieved.

"Because," I went on, "I heard him say, 'We can neither of us forget those days, can we, dear?'"

Florrie grew scarlet, opened her lips and shut them again.

"It seemed a pity that they should," I continued. "They were evidently pleasant days, and memories of them would be light burdens to carry through life. He was holding her hand, I believe."

"They may have been old friends," said Florrie, in a very small voice. "Perhaps they had not seen each other for a long time."

"It seemed as if there might be arrears."

"And perhaps they would not see each other again for years to come; it may have been good-bye between them forever."

"Partings of old friends are always painful, but I thought the chances were——"

"She may have thought she was fond of him when a very young girl, and may have found out her mistake."

"Oh, well, we are all entitled to our youthful fancies, of course!"

Florrie did not immediately reply. She looked pensively into the heart of the candle fire, and her foot began to tap nervously on the hide of a polar bear that formed the hearth-rug. Her interlaced fingers twisted against each other unconsciously, from which indications I inferred that I was to hear more, and I patiently awaited developments.

"It must have been," said Florrie, at length, "quite five years since I saw him, Jack."

"So long as that?"

Florrie withdrew her gaze from the fire. She rested her cheek on her hand, and looked up into my face confidingly. I preserved, I hope, an appearance of

interested attention, but, as a matter of fact, I was almost entirely engrossed in watching the play of the firelight in her eyes and on her hair.

"Quite five years," she repeated, firmly. "We were great friends at one time—that was before I knew you, Jack—and there was a time when I thought that—that——"

"Yes, you thought that—?" I remarked, encouragingly. Certainly the curve of her cheek was perfect.

"That I liked him well enough, you know; and, that night by the cliff, we talked over old times."

"That was nice."

"Well, it was, in a way, but rather sad. We have both changed greatly in those five years, I suppose. He has been in the West most of the time, prospecting and mining, and somehow he is quite different. I suppose it is the life. How lonely it must be, Jack, with nobody but Indians to talk to for weeks at a time!"

"I suppose he often thought of you and your old friendship when he was in the wilderness?" I ventured.

"Yes, he said he did."

"No wonder. When a man shuts the door on civilization for a time, his thoughts almost invariably go back to it, and to the people he knew best, who helped to make his life what it was. What a gap there is between an evening spent before the fire with you, in this cozily furnished room, and one by a lonely camp-fire, or in a noisy little hotel in a mining town. That old friendship and your memory would help him to resist many temptations."

"How did you know that?"

"It is human nature, I suppose—the constant striving of good against evil. The influence of pure, good associations clings to us when we are removed from them. Yes, he would often think of you at night, and your face might come to him in dreams."

"He said he used to dream of me, and wonder if I wasted a stray thought on him."

I nodded, sympathetically. Evidently, Florrie's old friend had played the game strictly according to rule. I

mentally put myself in his place, and thought out the next move.

"Yes, I can understand. He would wonder, too, if, after all these years you could not pick up the broken strands and join them together in a strong cord of love."

"He—he wanted to begin where we left off."

"Of course, that was when he took your hand," I remarked, approvingly. I was curious to hear if the procedure varied in the West.

"Ye-es; I was so sorry for him."

"Naturally. What did you say?"

"I told him that it was impossible; that I liked him very much, but that—that——"

"It hurt him, I have no doubt."

"He said it was what he had feared; but he had hoped, and—and he almost broke down, Jack."

I became satisfied that the procedure did not vary in the West; it is stereotyped, the world over. I lost interest, but followed matters out to their logical conclusion.

"How a good woman may twine herself around a man's heart! He will always carry your memory as something holy in his breast, and at the end—well, it is too bad, Florrie."

"He said he would, Jack, and it was so sad—and I cried."

"And then he kissed you good-bye—a brother's kiss!"

"He did not!" cried Florrie, indignantly. "I wouldn't, of course!"

Evidently there had been a mistake somewhere; I was disappointed in the West.

"Not even on the forehead?" I asked, in surprise. "It seems to me he might have. You wouldn't stand for it, you say?"

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Florrie, turning very red. "How can you say such a thing?"

"I would, if I had been in his place," said I, reflectively. "He led up to it very well, too."

"Jack!"

"The resisting temptation and all that was apparently well done. He must have bungled it, somehow."

"Are you trying to make me angry?" demanded Florrie, with a strong effort at self-control.

"Not at all," said I. "I am merely reviewing the possibilities of the situation. My own opinion is that your friend did not make the most of his opportunities. He was not in a canoe, and there was not that excuse."

"It is quite time you went home," interrupted Florrie, with dignity. "I do not wish to hear of any more of your flirtations."

"This, of yours, resembles one slightly," I suggested, mildly.

"It was not a flirtation; it was a good-bye," said Florrie, with due sadness.

"And mine," said I, "was not even a good-bye; it was only an introduction."

I got up to go.

"I hope you may never have to say good-bye to a dear friend," said Florrie, reproachfully.

"At any rate," said I, taking my hat, "it cannot be said of me that I bungle my good-byes."

But the details, going to prove that statement, are quite immaterial.



THE CHANOINESSE

WITH Vinagrette and purple robe and fan
Madame Mathilde would take the morning air,
And down the formal paths her old sedan
Comes gravely moving 'round the bright *parterre*.

By graveled walk and grotto with their gleam
Of marble nymph and satyr, row on row;
Past storied oak, cascade and glen that seem
The shepherd haunts of Boucher and Watteau.

The faithful Jacques and Joseph as of yore
Go drowsing with her chair; they, too, can see
The vision of the days—alas, no more—
That steals her from her jeweled rosary.

It is Versailles she sees—the masks, the plays,
Pavanes and minuets; she hears—beguiled—
The horns of St. Germain's far hunting-days
When beauty crowned her, and great Louis smiled.

And hark, another horn! Before her eyes
There comes her lover—scarcely more than boy;
She sees him pass in proud and martial guise;
Her tears grow large—she weeps o'er Fontenoy.

Bright days of conquest—bitter memories
That break her spirit!—till the old command
Lights in her eyes as down the path she sees
Her dear *curé* approaching, hat in hand.

THOMAS WALSH.

RED CABBAGE TO WIN

By Isaac Anderson

I AM not a gambling man, though I do occasionally take a hand in a friendly game of poker for small stakes. Also, at rare intervals, I go to the races, and bet a few dollars on some horse that hasn't a ghost of a chance to win. But I never go to the pool-rooms, or, at least, I never did until yesterday afternoon. I should not have gone then, except for Singerton.

Singerton is a literary man—signs himself Edward Howard Singerton, and likes to hear himself referred to as a "rising young novelist," although he is neither young nor rising. He is a novelist, however. About fifteen years ago he wrote a novel which ran almost half-way through one edition. At present, this book is so rare that it can be found only in the second-hand book shops, where it is offered for sale at prices varying from five to ten cents a copy.

Since the publication of his first book, Singerton has spent his time gathering material for another. One would run across him in the most unlikely and disreputable places—always gathering material. He must have accumulated barrels and barrels of it. I sometimes suspected that he was trying to corner the market.

But this is a digression. I was about to tell you how Singerton inveigled me into a pool-room, and showed me how to make money without working. I met him quite by accident, and suggested a drink. I was not thirsty, but I was lonesome, and you can't go anywhere and sit down for a quiet chat without ordering something, you know.

Singerton accepted the invitation, and we went to a quiet little place just

around the corner. After the fifth or sixth drink he became confidential, and asked me if I wanted to make some money.

I replied that I did if it did not require too much exertion.

He reassured me on this point, and told me in a whisper that he had a good thing—a dead-sure winner—and that, out of regard for our lifelong friendship, he would let me in on it.

I thanked him with tears in my eyes, and we sallied forth to make our fortunes. After swearing me to eternal secrecy, Singerton led me up a long, dark stairway, and knocked twice at a heavy oak door. A slide was opened, my companion whispered something, and we were admitted.

The room into which we were ushered was not a large one, nor were there many people in it. At one end was a small table, and behind it a blackboard with some names and figures chalked upon it. I knew immediately that the place was a pool-room, although the man who presided at the table did not look in the least like the book-makers I had seen at the races. His face was rather more refined than his occupation would lead one to expect, and his clothes were in very good taste, and not at all loud.

I soon turned my attention from the man to the odds written on the blackboard. They ran something like this:

Green Trapezoid.....	3-5
Naughty Dan.....	12-1
Caramel Annie.....	15-1
Lonely Mary.....	5-1
Lady Jane's Daughter-in-Law....	1-2
Red Cabbage.....	50-1

and about twenty more. I was reading over the list a second time, to see

if I could find a horse that I had ever heard of before, when a young man at my elbow addressed me, asking what I intended to play.

I replied, rather coldly, that I had not yet made up my mind. I had met "touts" before, at the race-tracks, and had no desire to deal with one of that profession.

But the young man was not to be rebuffed so easily. "Play Green Trapezoid," he whispered. "It's a sure winner. I am employed by Scribblers, and I've got inside information."

At this point we were interrupted by Singerton, who dragged me away to the furthest corner of the room. "Don't have anything to do with that fellow," he said. "He's a 'tout.' You play my tip, and you'll come out on top."

I answered that I was merely leading the young fellow on, to see what his game was. "What are you going to play?" I asked.

"Sh!" said Singerton. "How much money have you?"

I took out my roll, and counted it—forty-seven dollars and some odd change.

"Keep the two and the change," said Singerton. "We may get thirsty. I'll place the forty-five for you, and we'll divide the winnings."

Before I could quite make up my mind whether to accept his generous offer or not, he took the money, walked over to the table and handed over the bills, receiving in return a slip of paper, which he folded carefully and put in his pocket.

"Come on," he said to me. "Let's go down to Joe's. I'm dry as a bone."

"Hadn't we better wait and see if we win?" I asked.

"We won't know that until Satur-

day," replied Singerton, gently pulling me toward the door. I thought this rather strange, but remembered that I had once heard that there were such things as "future books" on the races, and held my peace. When we reached the street again, I asked Singerton what horse he had played.

"Horse!" he exclaimed; "horse! What under the sun are you talking about?"

I replied, with some asperity, that I thought I was talking about horses, but that I might possibly be mistaken.

"You certainly are," said Singerton. "Do you mean to say you thought we were betting on horses?"

"Of course I did. Wasn't that place a pool-room?"

"To be sure it was—a literary pool-room."

"A what?"

"A literary pool-room. One might think you had never heard of such an institution before."

"Never in my life. What do you bet on in a literary pool-room?"

"Why, on the six best-selling books of the week, of course! That's why we have to wait until Saturday for the returns. But you needn't worry about your money, old man. I played Red Cabbage to win, and the money's as good as in our pockets. That book is bound to head the list. I know, because I wrote it myself."

A true sport never hedges; besides, I have no more money. Otherwise, I might be tempted to go back to the pool-room and protect myself by playing the favorite. As it is, I can only wait.

But I wish Saturday were not such a long way off!



"THERE is no rest for the wicked." True; the wicked take all the good things of life, and we blameless paragons of virtue have to put up with the rest.

A SENSE OF HUMOR

By Cosmo Hamilton

"ANOTHER cup of coffee, please," said Billy Hutton, in his most cheerful voice, "and one lump of——"

The beautiful Mrs. Archibald Hay raised a long, white, pointed finger. "Hush!" she said; "I possess a memory."

Hutton's voice became almost tender, and he gave his host's wife a look in which there was very genuine admiration.

"You're an emporium of everything that's excellent. Shall I give you a kidney?"

Mrs. Hay made a long arm, and put a brimming cup of coffee near Hutton's elbow.

"Obviously," she said, "*your* memory is a very flabby thing! I never take kidneys. Now, even from a fortnight spent under the same roof, I know that you hate tea for breakfast——"

"Wonderful!"

"—that you never indulge in more than one lump of sugar——"

"Marvelous!"

"—being in a constant state of fear of encroaching flesh——"

"Too true!" cried Hutton, with a laugh which made the rafters ring.

"—that you *must* have a whiskey-and-soda at eleven, in order to look optimistically upon the world——"

"Right again!"

"—and that it is quite impossible for you to retire for the night without a mild cigar in a scorching bath."

Hutton was in the act of passing the toast-rack. His arm became arrested in mid-air, and his thick, dark eyebrows rose high. "How the dickens

do you know that?" he asked, profoundly astonished.

Before Mrs. Hay replied, she picked up several crumbs, and dropped them carefully into her plate. "I have seen little mountains of your ash," she said, with a very pleasant touch of reproof in her voice, "making a pattern on the bath-mat."

"By Jove! I'm sorry. Toast?"

"I always eat bread, Billy dear."

Hutton dropped the toast-rack, and pounced on a roll. "Of course you do. I hadn't forgotten."

Mrs. Hay laughed. It was the nearest thing to the song of a thrush which Hutton had ever heard. "What ingenious word do you call it by, then?"

"I only just didn't happen to remember, that's all."

And then they both laughed—Mrs. Hay, because she was amused at the man's bad logic, and Hutton, because he was amused at her amusement, and because her laugh was infectious.

He got up, crossed the room, and lowered the blind over one of the diamond-paned windows through which a shaft of sun had found its way and, having discovered Mrs. Hay, had been only too content to nestle into her hair. Absurd as it may seem, there was something of jealousy in Hutton's action.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Hay.

"You're a delicious thing," said Hutton, leaning over her chair.

With a little laugh, she raised her hand as a barrier, and in this way proved herself to be, if any proof were needed, an honor to her sex. "Too early, Billy," she said.

"Oh, bother! As if it's ever too early. Please!"

The barrier was still there, but the laugh still played at the corners of her mouth. "Kisses and breakfast don't go well together."

Hutton's astonishment found vent in a kind of gasp. He backed away from her, and stood staring.

"I don't believe you mean that," he said. "I don't believe it's possible for you to mean that."

Mrs. Hay held her head sideways, and looked at him out of the corners of her very beautiful eyes. "Oh, but I do," she replied.

"Then your knowledge of breakfasts is, if you will forgive my saying so, deplorably out of date. I think it's only charitable on my part to prove how well they go together."

"Hutton on Breakfasts," she laughed. "You must present me with a copy."

Her husband's old friend stood by her chair again. "I'll give you the whole edition for a single kiss."

"Ought they to be fried on toast, or deviled?"

Hutton put his hands into the pockets of his duck coat. A slightly sulky line was perceptible under his carefully curled mustache. "You're awfully wordy, this morning," he said.

Mrs. Hay pushed her chair away from the table, and rose to her feet. Hutton was a tall man, as men go, but Mrs. Hay, as she stood in front of him, appeared to be but a shade of an inch shorter. She ran her finger lightly from one to another brass button on his coat, and spoke slowly, with an effortless, musical drawl.

"My dear, impetuous Billy, a backwater is one thing, but a breakfast-room is quite another. I am no prude. At the same time, I have a great respect for the feelings of my servants. You see, they know that you are my husband's best friend, and, although they might overlook a quiet, moonlight kiss, I'm certain they'd put the worst interpretation on an early-morning one."

The sulky line around Hutton's mouth developed. "You're precious cautious about nothing, all of a sud-

den. What on earth is the world coming to, if a man can't be—chummy with his friend's wife?"

Mrs. Hay put her hands behind her, lifted her rounded chin, and looked at Billy under her eyelashes. "What would you say, my friend, if you caught my husband kissing your wife?"

"I never should."

"Why?"

"It's impossible."

"Why?"

"Well, simply because my wife is not that type of woman."

"What!" cried Mrs. Hay, with a sudden angry spot on each cheek.

Hutton added, with precipitation, "I mean to say, she doesn't kiss. It doesn't appeal to her."

"How do you know," she returned, still angry, "that it appeals to me?"

Hutton then showed that the diplomatic service had lost a shining light. "It's only too obvious that it doesn't," he said, calmly.

Mrs. Hay's anger died a sudden death. Her face dimpled, and she held it slightly up. "Is it?" she asked.

"By George, it isn't!" And he kissed her suddenly.

II

WHEREUPON, Viola Hay turned swiftly on her heel, and made her way to the veranda.

The doorway improvised a frame for her. Her beautiful figure, in its close-fitting white frock, was picked out like a silver point against the flaming border of flowers that ran around the bungalow. Beyond this rainbow, the lawn, cut close, stretched on a slight incline down to the bank of the Thames. The river, wide and dignified at this point, looked like a broad band of silver. On the other bank, in thick clumps, stood old trees, their twisted limbs shaded from the sun by their leaves, among which birds built their nests, launched their families into the world, and died. Beyond these, a series of meadows stretched, cut into uneven shapes by thick hedges which flung their shad-

ows across the grass. Over everything the sun spread his smile, and in the air danced myriads of shimmering specks, and the throbbing voices of larks filled the world with music.

For some minutes, Hutton stood watching Mrs. Hay. Something of the beauty of the scene seemed to have got into his blood. When he spoke, it was in a low voice, such as one uses in a cathedral.

"Let's go before the others come down," he said.

Mrs. Hay turned to him with a smile. Perhaps, under the circumstances, it was not unnatural that she took his lowered voice as a compliment to herself.

"My dear boy, please don't be so energetic. Do you know, for a change, I really think I shall wait and give poor Archie his coffee?"

"Dash it!" cried Hutton, "what have I got up for, then?"

"The pleasure of a tête-à-tête breakfast."

"The pleasure of having you to myself the entire morning, you mean. Do come, Vi. Oh, hang it, do come! You're so heavenly to look at that I shall crush the life out of you in a minute! And those blessed servants will be dodging in directly."

"And find me lifeless on the mat," laughed Viola, touching her hair expertly with her hand, "to say nothing of Peg. Poor Peg! I wonder if she cares the least bit for you, Billy."

"Cares for me!" echoed Hutton. "Of course she does. But she's all right. She's a good pal, and she lets me do as I like. She's a sensible little woman."

"Is she? I wonder. I think she rather underrated the attractions of other women."

Hutton tapped a cigarette impatiently on its case. "Oh, well, she never had any cause for complaint since she married me. I've flirted every now and then; but, hang it, she knows there has never been any danger in it."

A rather peculiar smile played round the lips of Mrs. Hay.

"Never any danger? And now, Billy, can you grow fond of me, do you think, without any danger?"

Hutton seized her hand, and carried it to his lips. His dark eyes blazed.

"Danger be hanged!" he said; "you're divine!"

Drawing her hand away, with a little, rippling laugh, Mrs. Hay crossed the room and rang the bell.

"My sunshade, please. You shall punt me up the backwater if you think you would care to do so."

She picked up a large garden hat, a poppy-laden thing, and fastened it on her head.

"What a scrumptious hat!" said Hutton, collecting the sunshade and an armful of cushions. "By George! you're the best-dressed woman I've ever seen. How do you do it?"

"Rather a strong artistic tendency, assisted by a good credit balance."

A servant entered.

"Bring the second breakfast, and let Major Hay and Mrs. Hutton know when it's ready."

Before the servant had left the room, Viola was on the veranda. Hutton joined her eagerly, and together they made their way to the lawn.

"Now, Billy," she said, "do learn to hold a sunshade in the direction of the sun."

"If I do that, I can't see your face."

"Then you must wait till you're in the punt. I can't have my skin spoiled because you can't see my face. . . . Really, Billy, what would Peg say, if she saw you looking at one like that?"

Hutton dropped a cushion, and kicked it hard. It lay, a soft, scarlet spot, on the green lawn ahead of them.

"I dunno, and I don't care! I can't think of anything but your beauty. I've forgotten everybody who was in my life a fortnight ago. I can't see or think further than you."

Mrs. Hay conveyed a patronizing sense of pleasure by resting her hand lightly on Hutton's arm.

"Dear old Billy! What a romantic person, isn't he?"

"Do hurry," said Hutton.

"My dear, I *am* hurrying."

"You hurry so slowly."

"That's philosophy."

Hutton arrived at the cushion, and gave it another kick toward the boat-house.

"It may be philosophy, but it's dashed annoying," he said.

III

BEFORE Mrs. Hay's laugh had quite died away, Major Hay hurried into the room, gave a swift glance about, noticed with anger the remains of two breakfasts, and made his way quickly to the veranda. The only thing the pleasant landscape contained, so far as he was aware, were the figures of his wife and his best friend, the former moving with her own peculiar grace, the latter striding along by her side, holding a parasol over her, kicking a cushion along. Hay clenched his fists, and swore loudly.

"Hullo, hullo, hullo! That's pretty language for so early in the morning. Aren't you ashamed of yourself, to be cross on such a too utterly perfect day, Archie?"

Mrs. Billy Hutton stood in the middle of the room, looking as fresh and sweet as a primrose.

Hay turned to her with a forced smile, and took her outstretched hand with a cordial deference. "I'm not cross," he said, "not I!"

"Oh!" she said, "what was the meaning, then, of that old-established little word?"

"Fact is, I was too late to catch Viola. For your sake, I assure you. So afraid you'll have too much of me."

"That's not possible, dear man. You're so suitable to the temperature. You never make one feel too hot, and you never make one feel too cold."

"Really!"

"And yet you're always doing something. Now, Viola looks so cool, so undisturbed, so pale in this heat, that she positively disconcerts me."

Hay's eyes still followed the retreating figures, and his hands were still

clenched. But he managed to fill his voice with a casual lightness which he thought would hide his feelings.

"How do you look when you're disconcerted?" he asked.

"My face gets sunburned, and my hair grows limp and uncured."

"Oh, no, never!"

Mrs. Billy followed the direction of Hay's eyes. She looked quickly from the two figures to her host. She noticed with a quick sympathy and understanding the anger and jealousy he he tried so politely to hide, and the clenched, nervous hands that betrayed the true state of his mind.

Hutton had arranged the cushions in the punt, and was handing Mrs. Hay into it tenderly. Hay stood watching everything with compressed lips, and his eyes screwed up. He didn't move or attempt to speak until the red sunshade turned into the bend of the river and was hidden by the bank.

In her turn, Mrs. Billy watched Hay. She saw the suppressed rage in his well-cut, soldierly face, and in the lines round his mouth, and she came to the conclusion that it would be necessary for her to use all the tact she possessed at all moments of the day, in order to prevent friction between these two men.

Opportunately, the servants came in and rearranged the table, and placed the fresh breakfast. The delightful aroma of hot coffee pervaded everything.

Mrs. Billy made a little dash at the table, and sat down.

"Breakfast!" she cried, with brisk cheerfulness. "Archie, not to put too fine a point on it, I starve, I literally starve!"

Hay gave a sigh, and shook himself. "That won't do at all," he said, with a brave attempt to catch her tone. "Now, then, shall it be deviled bones?"

"Deviled bones—to a starving female?"

"Omelet, then?"

Mrs. Billy laid a dainty hand upon the coffee-urn.

"What kind of omelet?"

Hay bent over it. "The usual kind of omelet. Egg, more egg, and still more egg."

Mrs. Billy laughed. It was a different kind of laugh from Mrs. Archie's. There was something of the timbre of the bell in it. "I know it. The insular omelet—unoriginal, but safe. Quite a lot, please. You have coffee, don't you?"

Hay nodded. "Coffee, thanks, yes. Really, Mrs. Billy, your briskness on this extremely sultry morning puts me to shame. I feel I must emulate you."

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Billy, pouring out coffee with one hand, and milk with the other, with a deftness born of much practice. "Strike out a line for yourself. Attack the bones. One lump, I think?"

"How well you know my eccentricities!"

"Well, you see, ten breakfasts——"

"Eight luncheons," added Hay, with a touch of grimness.

"Seven teas——"

"Five dinners."

"Six, I think," he corrected.

"Six dinners," she continued, bantering, "alone with the same man, give a woman an excellent opportunity of getting to know his little ways—almost as excellent as if she were married to him."

"More excellent," said Hay, gloomily.

"More excellent," laughed Mrs. Billy, but with a keen glance at her host. She saw a look of great pain come into his eyes, and she noticed that his lips trembled.

"Well, now," she added, endeavoring, by being studiously bright, to divert his unpleasant thoughts, "what are your movements for the day?"

"Well, I——"

"I know to a comma. Some of your pippin-faced tenants have appointments with you. You have to see Farmer Tomlinson about taking down his barbed wire before cubbing commences, and Farmer Wilkins about those odious slates on the roof of his

new barn. Tiles must be used instead."

Hay pushed away his untasted breakfast. "Yes, I'm afraid I have rather a busy——"

"Don't apologize," said Mrs. Billy. "For my part, I have only one wish—to sleep in the sun. In a minute, I shall get you to tuck me up into that beautiful long-armed, long-legged chair, surround me with cushions, and leave me in peace."

"If you really wish it, Mrs. Billy, I shall be only too glad. Viola, I fancy——"

"Oh, I wouldn't disturb Viola, for worlds! I find the sun the most delicious companion, believe me."

Hay began to dig holes in the salt with a silver apostle spoon, and Mrs. Billy knew, knowing men, that he was about to make a clean breast of the subject that was first in his thoughts.

"It's very kind of you to put it like that," he said, after a long pause; "very kind. Viola is your friend, and you came to see, and be with, her. Honestly, my dear Mrs. Billy, I have been—not worried, because, as everybody knows, I'm a most easy-going chap, quite *un*-jealous, and all that, don't you know, and, of course, I know and trust Vi so implicitly. But——"

"Well?" Mrs. Billy's sympathetic voice attracted confidence.

Hay dropped the spoon, and pushed the salt-cellar away. His eyes met Mrs. Billy's fair and square.

"But I've been wondering whether you've been thinking that it is rather queer form that we should be left to entertain each other so much."

Mrs. Billy's reply was perfectly truthful.

"Not the least little bit, dear man. I know Billy, you see."

A gleam of hope crossed Hay's face. "Quite so, quite so," he said, quickly.

"I like him to be amused," continued Mrs. Billy. "It saves me the trouble—and he wants constant amusement. Vi doesn't seem to mind, and I adore lazing in the sun. In my opinion, Vi is an admirable hostess; I

feel that she does unto others as she wishes others, under similar circumstances, to do unto her. She places entertaining among the fine arts. Billy is happy; I am happy. So, my dear friend, don't spoil it all by being glum yourself. Now, will you?"

Hay saw the argument from her point of view. But his point of view was not the same. As a host, he was delighted that his wife should entertain his old friend Hutton, but he saw no reason why his scheme of entertainment should demand the monopoly of his wife.

"Not I," he said. "I was thinking then about you. I was nervous—no, hardly nervous, but perhaps a little afraid, that you——"

"Well?"

"Well, that you might perhaps—er—misunderstand the position."

Mrs. Billy watched him draw the salt-cellar nearer, and begin digging holes again. Any one who knew her well could have told by the expression of her eyebrows that she had made up her mind to a course of action. There was no banter in her voice when she spoke.

"I don't really misunderstand," she said, "though I have tried to persuade you that I do. You are jealous."

Hay, metaphorically, flung down his cards.

"I am," he said, earnestly; "horribly!"

"Well, I can assure you there is no need for you to be. This is a harmless flirtation."

"For ten days, all day long, hour after hour—harmless!"

"Certainly. I repeat, from a most ripe knowledge, quite harmless."

"You're utterly certain?"

"I'm utterly certain."

"I'm not. Prove that there is no necessity for uneasiness."

"I will soon do that," said Mrs. Billy. "About once a year a husband gets bored—not precisely with his wife, but with his surroundings."

"I don't," said Hay.

"I mean the husband, generally. About once a year the wife frets at the

touch of the hand on the curb—not her husband's hand, exactly, but the hand of her surroundings. She knows that she used to be very beautiful, very fascinating, very charming. That is, she knew it before she married, for most men thrust the fact upon her notice. But the husband has a way, however really affectionate and faithful he may be, of taking things for granted. He is perfectly aware of the fact that his wife is beautiful, charming and fascinating, but he doesn't see the use of telling her so. Why should he? But, you see, madame the wife likes to be told by the husband that she is beautiful, and she likes to be told often. It is as necessary to her, more necessary to her, than daily bread. That is the little irritant, and it is at this moment that another man comes on the scene, who admires her and tells her so. Mark that, my friend. He tells her so, and consequently he appears, at first, to possess every virtue the husband lacks."

Hay listened with the utmost attention.

"And when," he said, "the wife does become a little restive, and some one turns up, to thrust the fact of her beauty upon her, what course does the husband pursue?"

"The wise husband," replied Mrs. Billy, "allows the little flirtation."

"Allows it!" cried Hay.

"Certainly. It bores the wife to death in about a month. All the time she is finding out how unlike the husband this other man is, and it is always to the other man's disadvantage. When the incident is over, the husband, if he is wise, sets back his calendar to the honeymoon, and God's in His heaven, all's right with the world."

Hay rose from his chair with a gay laugh. He raised his arms, and seemed to fling off a heavy pack that had been fastened to his shoulders. His whole face was alight.

"Mrs. Billy," he said, "you're a splendid little woman. How do you know these things?"

Peg laughed. "Observation, dear man, and—and experience."

"Well, but I've had heaps of experience. Do you mean to say that I've no observation?"

"My dear Archie," she replied, with a charming touch of sententiousness, "no amount of observation or experience ever enables a man to understand a woman."

"Why not?"

"Because a man looks at a woman through the strongest magnifying-glass that's invented, and that confines him to the surface; whereas a woman uses the X-rays of intuition, and sees right through. Don't worry any more, Archie; there's not the slightest need."

Hay strode over to his friend's wife and gave her his hand.

"You have made me feel a different man," he said, gratefully. "I am eternally grateful. I'm a jealous brute, but, you see——"

"You're very much in love with your wife, I know, and that is where, if you would only realize it, your safety lies."

"How?"

"No woman in this world will give up a certainty, a solid possession, for something which might turn to nothing as she grasped it. I am sure that Viola would find out before she grasped. See?"

She shook his hand again, and went over to the window.

"I see," said Hay. "Thanks so much."

Mrs. Billy stood in exactly the same spot, in exactly the same attitude as Viola had done, half an hour before, and Hay stood watching her as Hutton had watched Mrs. Hay, but not in the same way. There was admiration in his eyes, certainly, but there was also a great respect. The former had been in Hutton's eyes, but not the latter. It makes all the difference.

"Now, for any sake," cried Mrs. Billy, with mock impatience, "put me into that chair. I've talked so much, and eaten so much, that I *must* sleep in the sun."

Hay drew the long chair out of the room into the veranda and on to the edge of the lawn.

"How will that do?" he asked.

"Splendidly. Now for cushions."

"How many?"

"Hundreds," she said.

He collected as many as he could carry, and took them out. "Here are thousands."

Mrs. Billy sank into the chair with a sigh of content.

"Good," she murmured; "this is perfect."

"It will be when you have a sunshade," said Hay.

"Sunshade!" cried Mrs. Billy. "Go away, you Goth. I want the sun."

"You'll be pickled!" warned Hay.

"No," corrected Mrs. Billy; "preserved."

Hay chuckled, and, pretending that he thought she was already asleep, crept elaborately away on tiptoe.

IV

"THE wise husband," Mrs. Billy said, if you remember, "allows the little flirtation," and in that short, philosophical sentence touched upon the turning point in the domestic happiness of nearly every married couple.

It is not necessary to be married to know that marriage and racing are the two most uncertain institutions in the world, because in the former, as in the latter, people back their fancies without having any certain information. Neither need one have any doubt as to which is the more expensive hobby. There must be any number of millions of married people in this country. The happy ones could, I suppose, be counted upon the fingers of two hands; for it is not easy to be happy though married. It is a problem Adam and Eve set, and it has not often been solved.

The reasons are many and obvious. People meet under romantic circumstances, and, mistaking their merely artistic feelings for love, marry. They know nothing of each other's character or temperament. They have had no time to study hereditary tendencies. In most cases, even banking accounts are not entered into. More foolish

still, the man lifts the woman from mother earth, and places her on the summit of a stucco pedestal. Disillusionment follows as the night the day; and upon its heels come the daily jangle, the nightly tirade. Every jangle, every tirade, shakes the cement of the pedestal. To these marriages there are only three ends: judicial separation, divorce, or a life of angry looks, constant sarcasm, unpleasant innuendo, utter and complete unhappiness—the ruin of two lives.

Mrs. Billy Hutton's marriage was one of those which could be counted upon the fingers of two hands. She lived with Billy a life of complete content. She had not entered into a life-partnership with him without being thoroughly aware of all his bad, as well as all his good, qualities. She knew that he was weak, easily led, extravagant, self-indulgent, and inclined to sulk if he did not get his own way. But she knew that he was extremely kind-hearted, very generous, and, above all, very devoted to, and a little frightened of, herself.

On his side, he, too, had studied, before marriage, the character of the woman who had agreed to be his wife. At the first blush, her beauty and charming personality, her equability, her delicious laugh, her accomplishments, blinded him to everything else. But he soon discovered that he was the more in love of the two; that it would be necessary for him, for all her good nature, to treat her wishes with deference; that, in short, she demanded quite quietly, but quite firmly, his respect as well as his admiration. Without any discussion or argument, a mutual compact was agreed to that there should be an equal amount of give-and-take on both sides. Each trusted the other implicitly, and so at once, from the outset, jealousy, the rock on which the matrimonial canoe so often splits, found no place. "The wise husband allows the little flirtation," Mrs. Billy had said; and she had always mentally added, "the wise wife, also."

During the five years of their married life, Billy had carried on several

flirtations with pretty women. During the course of these temporary aberrations, Mrs. Billy had remained passive, secure in the knowledge of her own power and in her husband's loyalty. It so happened that she herself had been too busy, first with furnishing her house, and subsequently in entertaining, or being entertained, to go in for extraneous flirtation. The right sort of woman flirts only when time hangs heavily on her hands. With Mrs. Billy time never hung heavy. Her days were never long enough.

Wherefore, when Billy took an instant fancy for Viola Hay, and, from the first day of their visit, paid her constant attention, Peg's feelings were merely those of quiet amusement. During the season just at an end, she had found no time to keep up with the latest books. On a visit to the Hays, in their delightful bungalow on the banks of the Thames, all she wanted to do was to read, sit in the sun, write her letters, and recuperate.

But in regard to the Hays, what of them? They also had been married five years. They also were sensible people, who had not rushed blindfold into such a serious undertaking as marriage.

It is true that Archibald Hay was, and always had been, desperately in love with his wife. But he was one of those men who, having been many years in the army, have been taught to repress their feelings. He looked upon the expression of his deep sentiments as bad form. His manner to Viola was always consistently deferential and courteous, but he rarely let himself go, and never before a third person. In many ways he resembled Mrs. Billy. He had the same equable temperament, the same capability of being busy with very little to do, the same hatred of killing time. But, unfortunately for himself, and for the lasting success of his marriage, he was a jealous man.

In many ways, also, Viola Hay resembled Hutton. She, too, was self-indulgent, weak, easily led, extrava-

gant, and inclined to sulk. She married Archie Hay because she loved him. She never for a moment stopped to give a thought to his temperament, and she never had been quite able to understand his notions as to repression of feeling.

It cannot be said that her five married years had ever contained a genuinely unhappy hour. Equally, it cannot be said that they had ever contained a genuinely and completely happy one.

Shortly before the Huttons' arrival at the bungalow, she had been left a good deal to herself. Hay had been called away to their place in Scotland to see to the building of a new wing. During the inert days spent alone, she had ruminated over her husband's matter-of-fact manner of regarding her, and had encouraged a slight, almost imperceptible soreness into an open wound. When Billy came, she gladly played her part in the flirtation he seemed so anxious to begin, and, smarting under the impression that her husband cared less for her than he did at the time of their marriage, threw aside her good sense, and allowed herself to be in Billy's company from morning till night, day after day.

It is obvious that very little was needed to render the partnership between the Hays a deplorably unhappy one.

V

VERY shortly after Mrs. Billy had been made entirely comfortable in the sun, two servants took possession of the breakfast-room. They saw the chair on the edge of the lawn, but no sunshade and no head; and so, with the inaccuracy of their class, came to the conclusion that the chair was empty. Therefore, they didn't think it necessary to lower their voices.

"Please, Jane, be quick," said Barming, appealingly. "It's my evenin' out, an' these double breakfasts is worse than invalids."

"Yes," replied Stanner, packing up the plates, "they do delay somethin'

awful. I couldn't fancy a flirtation with kidneys about. I prefer moonlight."

"Oh, I don't know about that. One of the nicest days I ever 'ad was August bank 'oliday a twelvemonth. Me an' Jim went to Brighton by excursion. That train was crowded, an' no mistake. An' Jim, when the tunnels come"—she giggled—"well, he *did* flirt!"

Stanner buttered a piece of toast on both sides, and balanced a large piece of strawberry jam in the middle of it with the absorbed air of a connoisseur. "Yes, that's very nice; but Jim, he's not what I call a real flirt."

"Jim's not!" cried Barming. "Give 'im a trial in a tunnel with no lights in the carriage!"

Stanner poured herself out a cup of coffee, and put into it three lumps of sugar.

"Yes, but tunnels ain't classy. Now, does Jim take your 'and at breakfast, look daggers of love, an' say, 'You're too 'eavenly for anything! I shall crush the life out of you in a minute!'"

Barming gave a scornful laugh. "No," she answered, "nor any one else, for that matter."

"I 'eard it just now spoken in 'ere."

Barming almost dropped a cup. Her face lighted up with curiosity and eagerness.

"The missus and Mr.——?"

"That's it," said Stanner, with the air of one who holds a hand of court cards. "I was comin' in while they was eatin'. I was off like a bird. I've 'ad no experience in missus's flirtations, but I don't suppose she likes people to come in sudden. I 'adn't noticed anything before, but if that's the kind of thing 'e says to 'er, it seems to be a bit off the normal."

"It's in the 'eat, I suppose," said Barming, in a quiet, awed voice.

"An'," went on Stanner, delighted with the impression she was creating, "Mr. 'Utton's no kid in these affairs. 'E can find 'is way about, I know. You can see 'is lady's used to 'is little games, too. They don't

disturb 'er, Rose, any more than watchin' 'im eat poached eggs."

"You mean to say Mrs. 'Utton don't mind?"

"Mind! Not she! She puts me in mind of 'Nelly Bly caught a fly, tied it to a string, let it go a little way, an' then—she pulled it in.'"

Barming became thoughtful. "That's all very well, but some string breaks."

"Or slips off. You're right, Rose. An' between you an' me an' this table-cloth, this is the time that Nelly Bly's fly slips. Of course, Mrs. 'Utton mayn't 'ave 'ad it so bad before as to make 'er nervous, but then she's never 'ad such a lovely woman as missus against her. Besides, missus knows the ropes. She's been to India."

"More 'eat," murmured Barming. "And do you think she cares about 'im, Jane?"

"Yes, Rose, I do. An' no wonder. 'E's just my sort—dark, with a curled mustache, a cleft in 'is chin, and, oh, my! what eyes!"

The grandfather clock in the hall struck ten.

Stanner, with a quick, characteristic movement, caught up her tray and hurried to the door, speaking as she went.

"Now, Rose, what are you doin', gossipin' like this? A nice row you'd get into if missus 'adn't gone to Lover's Backwater. Come away now, do!"

Barming put the table-cloth under her arm, and picked up the other tray.

"That's it, say it's me," she said, and followed Stanner out.

The door closed with a bang.

Quite quietly, Mrs. Billy rose from her chair, and, with a peculiar little smile in her eyes, came into the room.

The onlooker always sees more of the game than the batsman or the bowler.

VI

"LET it go a little way," quoted Mrs. Billy, aloud, "and then she pulls

it in.' . . . Ye-es! and then she pulls it in!"

Quick footsteps came nearer and nearer. Archie Hay came into the room hurriedly. He looked as white as a ghost. Without a glance at Mrs. Billy, he made his way to a chair, and, sitting down heavily, covered his face with his hands.

Peg's heart went quickly. A kind of prophetic feeling of approaching evil seized her. She shook it off as her eyes caught the exquisitely placid landscape without. How was it possible for anything evil to exist in such a beautiful world?

She caught the busy humming of bees, the throbbing note of the lark pouring out his soul to the sun; her eye took in the flaming colors round the lawn, the many greens of the unmoving trees, heavy-laden with leaves, the cool shadows thrown upon the water. Everywhere without the hand of peace rested tenderly.

Then her eyes turned into the room. There sat a man, with his face buried in his hands, a usually undemonstrative man, endeavoring, it seemed to her, to shut out a sight he would have given everything he possessed in the world never to have seen.

"Archie," she whispered, "what is it?"

Hay made a slight movement, but answered not a word.

She crossed to his side, and laid her hand on his shoulder. "Dear old Archie, what has happened?"

"Give me a minute, Mrs. Billy," said Hay, hoarsely. "I've got to tell you, but I haven't the strength or the pluck yet. Wait—a minute."

"Very well, dear friend," she replied, quietly.

There followed a pause. To Peg, whose every nerve was tense, through whose brain a hundred wild surmises chased one another, the minutes seemed like hours. She sat on the window-seat, with her hands spread out on the vermilion cushions, and waited.

Her neat figure in its white frock was thrown up against the dark oak of the window-frames. A glint of sun fell

upon her head, and set her hair on fire. She looked very young and slight.

Suddenly, Hay got up, with a forced laugh.

"Well, Mrs. Billy," he said, "I'm afraid this time my magnifying-glass saw further than your X-rays. This is, I suppose, the exception that proves the rule. I—I don't know how to tell you."

Mrs. Billy had herself well under control. "Don't try," she said, quietly. "I can guess. They've carried their flirtation just a little over the border, eh?"

Hay groaned. "A little over the border! My God! I saw them——"

He broke off, and flung out his hand. "I spoke to them. I told them to come here. I told them we'd better discuss the matter coolly—coolly! So they're coming. They are on their way. They'll be here in five minutes, and I shall lose her—lose her!"

His voice broke. Then he pulled himself together, angrily, and faced the wife of the man he wished from his soul he had never met.

"Forgive my selfishness. You will suffer equally with me. Believe me, I am sick for you—sick! If I can do anything—if I can help you in any way—for both our sakes . . ."

Mrs. Billy sprang up from the window-seat, and caught Archie's hands excitedly.

"For both our sakes pull yourself together now. We have come to the crossroads in our lives. Now there's a certain way out of most situations of this kind, and there's a certain way out of this."

"I see no way," said Hay. "I see only the divorce-court looming on the horizon."

"That's true. I don't minimize the danger. But I've got a theory that a sense of humor, firmly applied, can turn every serious drama into a light comedy."

Hay drew himself up, and looked very hurt.

"I am afraid," he said, gravely, "that I regard this matter as a serious one."

Mrs. Billy put out her hand, appealingly.

"And I, too. But will you trust me, Archie? Will you, for once, follow a woman's lead? Will you believe in a woman's instinct? Will you, Archie, will you?"

"Mrs. Billy," replied Hay, "I'll do anything on God's earth you tell me, but—they were in each other's arms!"

Mrs. Billy's lips tightened, but she smiled cheerily.

"Forget that," she said. "Let us try, both of us, to forget that. It's the most evanescent phase. We'll make them sorry, in the next forty-eight hours, that they ever met, if you'll only obey me now."

Hay caught something of her confidence. "I will!" he exclaimed; "I will, I swear!"

"Good!" cried Mrs. Billy. "Can you act?"

"I've played small parts as an amateur."

"I cast you now for the leading part in this play, and I want you to act with all the spirit and resource that you possess."

"I confess," began Archie, nervously, "that I hardly see——"

"Quick! Listen to me! When they come in, take up an uncompromising position by the fireplace, with the most determined expression on your face. I will sit on the settee, with my face hidden from their view, my whole attitude denoting grief. Then proceed to dress them down in the most scathing words at your command. Begin by pointing out that they have done their best to ruin our lives, and end by stating that you have no belief in divorce, and so don't feel justified in giving Viola her freedom. Then turn to me, and, with all the passion you can muster, confess that you have grown to love me, and ask me if I will trust my ruined life to you. I will rise, and look at you with a wondering gratitude in my eyes—oh, I'm a little Bernhardt in my way, believe me!—place my hand in yours, and we will drift out after the manner of Sydney Carton and Mimi."

"But," said Hay, "if they love each other?"

Mrs. Billy's voice became very serious.

"Archie," she said, "I'm not fooling you; I know that Vi doesn't love Billy, and that Billy doesn't love her. They'll say they do, but they would neither of them break up their homes for untold gold. We, you see, use up our superabundance of electricity in hundreds of energetic ways. They don't, and the sun simply fires it. That's the whole thing. It all means nothing, and if we apply the non-conductor, humor, sharply and decisively upon their respective heads, you will soon discover how very little their hearts are concerned. Will you try this plan?"

Hay took Mrs. Billy's hand, and kissed it.

"Try? Of course, I will try. I can't be grateful enough to you for all your courage and readiness. It makes me realize what an egregious ass I should have made of myself if I had not had your common-sense view shown me just at this moment. Yes, I will try, if only to show my gratitude to you, you brave little woman, and—and I pray God your plan will work."

"Ssssh!" whispered Peg; "here they come. Act, act, for all you're worth!"

VII

THE rustle of a gown on the grass drifted into the room. Slow, heavy steps followed. Viola gave a curious, cold little laugh, and walked with her peculiar, swan-like movement, into the room. She shot a quick glance at her husband, who stood, bolt upright, in front of the fire, and at Peg, who sat on the settee, in her studied attitude. She then deliberately arranged the cushion in a big easy-chair, and sat down, drumming her fingers on the arms of it.

Billy followed her. He looked nervous and ill at ease and sulky. He flung his panama hat into a corner and, without looking at his wife,

stood by a cabinet in one of the angles of the room, and commenced to fidget with a china god with movable arms and head.

There was a long, uncomfortable pause.

Unable to bear the silence, Hutton turned his head toward Hay. "Well?" he said, with a burst. "What the devil do you mean to do about it?"

Hay looked up slowly, and spoke with studied contempt and sarcasm.

"I'm really sorry, Hutton, to have to keep you waiting. The situation, I find, is a little difficult to comprehend."

Hutton endeavored to hide his discomfort by bluster.

"There's not much comprehension needed, it seems to me," he said. "I love your wife, and your wife loves me. There's the thing in a nutshell."

Hay's hands closed tightly, and a gleam of jealous anger came into his eyes.

"No doubt," he replied, controlling his voice with an effort, "that part seems to you easy of comprehension. I admit the narrowness of my point of view. But it's the final issue that requires thought, I find."

"We'll go to France, if you like, or Timbuctoo. I don't mind. If you want to pot at me, you can."

Viola threw back her head, and laughed scornfully. "Really, are we in the Middle Ages? Are such things allowed? In any case, need we be so—extreme?"

Hay cleared his throat, and altered his attitude. Watching him from the corners of her eyes, Mrs. Billy came to the conclusion that the stage had lost a remarkable actor.

"My dear Viola, my excellent friend Hutton, and my dear Mrs. Billy," he said, looking, as he spoke, from one to the other, "beyond all else I wish, if possible, to avoid anything in the nature of an unpleasant scene. I am particularly anxious not to keep you in a hottish room longer than necessary, but I must ask you to give me a few moments of your time. Mrs. Billy, you know why we are here."

"You told her?" cried Hutton, in a tone of righteous indignation.

"I told her," replied Hay, quietly.

"Good Lord!"

"Yes, I told her. We will waive the fact, Hutton, that you and I have been close friends for years. We will waive the fact that my wife has been Mrs. Billy's closest friend for a still longer period. We will agree that all's fair in"—he gave a little smiling bow—"love. Therefore, what is the point at issue? You tell me you and my wife love each other. I presume for ever and ever—passionately—till death parts you."

The sarcasm stung Billy into an angry retort. "You presume damn well right," he said.

Hay bowed again, with another easy smile. Mrs. Billy felt almost compelled to cry, "Bravo!" especially when she saw that his hands were trembling.

"So," he continued, "there is, at any rate, no need for us—Mrs. Billy and me—to consider either of you because you have looked after yourselves so well. Consideration must be given solely to Mrs. Billy and to myself."

With a little, bored sigh, Mrs. Hay stretched herself lazily. "Isn't this rather long-winded?" she asked.

"I will be quite brief," said her husband. "I merely want to ask you what we are to do—Mrs. Billy and I. Has either of you thought of us? Naturally, you have been too occupied in thinking of each other! I may say at once that we have no intention of ending this matter in the usual way. There is something so banal about the seventh day in the divorce-court—still proceeding. We have no ambition to emulate the shining lights of smart society. It is extremely expensive, and quite unnecessary, as we do not wish to advertise. Besides, it would effectually extinguish our lights. There is another way. We will follow your example."

He paused. Hutton looked up quickly, with a deep flush. Mrs. Hay's eyebrows lost their affected indifference, and a look of something like fright came into her eyes.

"We will follow your example," repeated Hay. "There shall be no scandal, no publicity, no divorce-court, but with you two under the same roof to satisfy the requirements of convention, Mrs. Billy and I will lead our lives together." With a movement of tender solicitude, which was worthy of Charles Wyndham, he turned toward Peg. "Mrs. Billy—Peg—there is no longer any need for me to keep silence. For many days I have seen you constantly. What can that mean to any man who can appreciate all your splendid gifts to their full value? Only one thing."

He paused again, and caught a look of admiration and amusement from Mrs. Billy.

Viola's expression had undergone a complete change. Her fingers drummed no more on the arms of the chair. She sat bolt upright, staring at her husband, startled, unable to believe that what she heard was not being spoken in a dream.

As for Billy Hutton, he stood with his mouth open, with all the color gone from his face. He looked like a man badly knocked out after a bout with the gloves.

Hay went nearer to Mrs. Billy, and bent slightly over her chair.

"I have been loyal to my wife, as you have been loyal to your husband. They have proved dead-sea fruit." He then put into his voice a touch of passion. "But you are the true, the intoxicating vine. Let us eschew all thoughts of unholy matrimony, and cling together through our lives in free and perfect bliss. Peg, will you place your sweet hand in mine, and trust in me?"

Viola rose from her chair, involuntarily, as though drawn up from it. Hutton held his breath, and fixed his eyes with a look of appeal upon his wife. She, Peg, gave her hands to Hay, and stood by his side. There was something very simple and touching in the action.

"Whither thou goest," she said, in a low, sweet voice, "I will go. Thy people shall be my people, and your life my life."

With his eyes fixed on hers, out of which she managed, with a great effort, to keep a look of intense amusement and sense of fun, Hay led her slowly out of the room and across the lawn to the river.

In blank amazement and inexpressible horror, Viola watched them go.

Hutton, in a kind of frenzy of rage, dashed the china god off the cabinet, and then kicked the jagged pieces into a corner of the room.

In the distance, a pea-hen gave a sad cry.

VIII

THAT evening, Viola and Billy Hutton had tea and dinner alone together. They waited for the others to come until both meals were cold.

Viola handed Hutton a cup of tea in silence. He stirred it angrily, looked into it for several minutes, and put it down, untasted.

Many times between tea and dinner he went into the bungalow and called, "Peg! Peg!" Many times he stumped across the lawn to the boat-house, and scanned the river to the right and left.

The sun sank slowly, reluctantly, behind a mass of crimson clouds. The birds chattered about the doings of the day, and went to sleep. Myriads of gnats, in battalions, chased one another in their aimless, energetic way, and retired for the night, no one knew where. Bees, honey-laden and tired, went home, and wasps gave up their search for jam and fruit till the next day. Shadows lengthened as the sun retired, and the moon rose upon a quiet, placid world.

For the third time Stanner sounded the dinner-gong.

With a sense of injury too deep to put into mere words, Billy again visited the boat-house, and Viola peered into the shadow and listened eagerly for the plash of oars.

Neither noticed the exquisite effects of the trees cut sharply against the cloudless sky. Neither noticed the thin line of silver which touched everything like a layer of snow. Neither

enjoyed the scent of jasmine and honeysuckle which hung upon the quiet air. Both were filled with horror and self-pity. Both were thinking bitterly of the unaccountable immorality so suddenly developed by their respective better-halves.

While they pretended to eat dinner in silence at opposite ends of the table, Peg, in the best of spirits, and Archie Hay, dismal and cheerless, rested themselves at a meal in an arbor in the garden of a hotel two miles down the river.

Rising unsatisfied in every sense of the word, Billy left the room without a remark to Mrs. Hay, and proceeded to pack his clothes. Then he sent Stanner to Mrs. Hay to ask whether the dog-cart might be made use of, and, having obtained permission, bundled his kit-bag into it, jumped in beside the groom, and drove furiously into the night.

His destination proved to be the station at Maidenhead. Arrived there, he tipped the puzzled groom, told him he was going to London on particular business, watched the dog-cart disappear on its return journey, and took a cab, with his kit-bag, to the Bull Inn. Here he sulkily engaged a room, had his bag sent to it, and took up an unapproachable position in the corner of its comfortable private bar, and steadily read a two-weeks'-old sporting paper upside down till midnight, when he went angrily to bed.

He would tell you, if you asked him, that he heard the church clock strike every hour of the early morning. And he would be most indignant if you were to smile incredulously.

Viola, who had by ten o'clock worked herself into the most furious temper, went up to her room and locked the door. Her maid came and tapped timidly, and was ordered away. Her windows were open, and at every sound she started to her feet and listened eagerly. The minutes between ten o'clock and half-past ten seemed to her the longest she had passed in her life.

Suddenly, she heard the swirl of a

dress and steps coming from the river. Trembling, and on the verge of tears, she ran swiftly to the door, unlocked it and stood listening.

If Archie had entered at that moment she would have gone on her knees to him and begged forgiveness.

But no Archie came.

Mrs. Billy made her way quickly upstairs, humming a little air, stopped at Mrs. Hay's door for a moment and called out, brightly, "Good night, Vi!" and passed on to her room.

For an hour Viola stood listening and waiting. Then, at last, unable to bear the suspense, she went down to the hall. It was in darkness except for the light of the moon. She passed from the breakfast-room to the dining-room, from the dining-room to Archie's smoking-room. Each place was empty.

"Archie! Archie!" she whispered.

No answer came. An owl hooted, and far away in the distance a dog barked. The silence frightened her.

She turned and went back quickly to her room. The air chilled her. She crossed to shut the window, and, with a hot pain in her heart, saw that the bachelor's room in the boat-house was lighted up. Archie was there.

With a little sob, she flung herself face downward on the bed, and cried like a child.

IX

FOUR exquisitely fine days passed. On the Friday morning, after Hay and Mrs. Billy had breakfast alone, Stanner and Barming proceeded to turn out the room—a domestic revel which, though quite necessary, is always calculated to undermine the temper of the man of the household.

All the furniture in the many-cornered, oak-wainscoted breakfast-room was covered with cloths; all the chairs were piled upon the table. Barming, with a duster tied over her head, was on her knees, polishing the parquet floor. Stanner, out on the veranda, was shaking mats vigorously. The little clouds of dust shot forth at each shake.

She suddenly stopped her operations, and, looking round the corner of the door, gave a soft, excited whistle.

Barming started nervously, and paused in her work.

"Oh, Jane, don't!" she said, fretfully. "Whistle before five of a Friday, and you'll be sure to cry before ten of a Saturday."

Stanner dropped the mats, and ran into the room.

"Rose," she whispered, "she's at it again."

"Who's at what?" asked Barming.

"Why, the missus. Creepin' about like a panther after the master an' Mrs. 'Utton."

"Oh, Lor'!" said Barming, looking uneasily over her shoulder.

"Do you know," Stanner continued, "that this is the fourth day of this hide-an'-seek business?"

"The fourth! Well, there's no animal can fly so fast as the time, they say!"

Stanner returned to the window, collected the mats, and went on her knees beside Barming.

"Get on, Rose; we're all be'ind time with this blessed room. We can talk as we work."

"I can't 'urry more than I am 'urrying," said Barming, with a kind of whine; "I never could. The upset of this 'ouse'old 'as communicated itself to me. I'm all of a tremble for fear of what's comin' next."

"I like anything like that," said Stanner. "If I'd been a man, I should 'ave been a detective. I'm going to get right to the bottom of this; I wish I could get some slip into this floor."

"Seems to me there's too much slip in this 'ouse. Look at Mr. 'Utton. 'e's slipped, an' no mistake! Not a sign of 'im since Monday."

Stanner chuckled. "And if I know anything about symptoms, the major and Mrs. 'Utton are on the slip, too."

"Yes," said Barming, with a kind of triumph, "and all along you kept on saying it was the missus and Mr. 'Utton."

"Ah, but we've set to partners since

Monday. Mr. 'Utton's gone, the missus is left, and the master's carrying on with missus's man's wife."

"Oh, Jane," said Barming, with an involuntary laugh, "you do run on!"

"Run on! I should 'ave to be a prize sprinter to keep pace with this lot! They're flying-machines!"

Barming got up and began rearranging the chairs. "I'd give a lot to know 'ow we really stand."

"Well, look the facts in the face. Mr. 'Utton's turned as gloomy as a coal-'ole, and 'as gone off on 'is own. Where? Can't say. Why? Dunno. The missus is colder, freezinger than ever I've seen 'er."

"An' yet she pays more attention to the master than ever she done before the 'Uttons come!" exclaimed Barming.

"Artfulness!" said Stanner, knowingly. "She wants something. And Mrs. 'Utton? She's more like a young bee than ever—always on the buzz. An' a limpet couldn't cling tighter to master than she does. 'Will she go there?' says the mistress. 'If Archie likes,' says she, blushin' like a bride."

"Oh, come, Jane, when did you ever see 'er blushin'?"

"I didn't need to see it, stupid; I 'eard it in 'er voice."

Barming got up and commenced removing the covering from the furniture.

"Well, any'ow," she said, with a touch of pleasure, "missus is fairly out in the cold."

"Ah, but she won't remain there long," said Stanner, prophetically. "Take it from me. She isn't the one to sit by while another woman flirts with 'er 'usband, same as Mrs. 'Utton did. Not she! The icier she gets, the 'otter the fermentation inside. . . . 'Ave you done?"

"Yes," said Barming, "I've done."

"Come along, then; we'll get on to the drawing-room. Thank goodness there's a good view of the garden from there. We shall be able to see something of the new lovers, p'r'aps. Bring your cloths."

"Makes work a pleasure, don't it?"

said Barming, as she followed Stanner into the hall.

X

A RIPPLE of merry laughter drifted into the room.

Mrs. Billy, in an ingenuously simple hat, peeped in, and then beckoned over her shoulder.

"Vi's all right, Archie; she isn't here."

Hay slowly joined her, and followed her into the room. He looked as though he had not slept for several nights. There were lines under his eyes, and he was not so scrupulously well-groomed as usual.

"I'm hot," he said, "and tired, and very miserable."

"Of course you are," replied Mrs. Billy, brightly. "So am I." And then she laughed merrily, and made herself quite comfortable in a deep arm-chair. "What a chase!" she added. "She seemed determined not to let us out of her sight this morning."

Hay lighted a cigarette, took one puff and flung it gloomily away. "I can't understand it," he said.

"Nor I—quite. But if only she would look a little fatigued herself, how it would help me. She never appears to hurry, and yet she won't catch us. It's a horrid sensation."

"Poor darling!" said Archie, with deep feeling, "and she so hates walking."

"But only think, my dear Archie, what large doctor's bills we are saving her! Do you know how I feel? Like a girl again, out of bounds, with a school-mistress after me."

Hay sat down, heavily. "And do you know how I feel?"

"No; how?"

"Like a criminal. The whole time you and I are playing our parts, I'm wishing we had never taken them up. I don't think I've ever been so out of temper in my life. What good is it doing? Why does Vi follow us about?"

Peg began to fan herself. "My dear man, for the best of reasons. She's jealous."

"Jealous!" cried Archie, eagerly. "Are you sure?"

Mrs. Billy grew sympathetic when she caught the hopeful look in Hay's eyes.

"Quite sure," she said. "And, like all jealous people, she's forced to rub salt well into the wound. Every time I take your arm, every time I smile deliciously at you—and I *can* smile deliciously when I try—every time I contrive to induce you to bend your head down to me—and it isn't often—in goes the salt. She hates watching us, but she is obliged to do so to convince herself that what she believes about us is really true."

"What does she believe?"

"She believes all you said to me on Monday. She believes that you and I, as counsel for the prosecution always puts it, are more to each other than we should be. Oh, isn't it too funny!" Mrs. Billy's silvery laugh echoed among the beams.

"No," replied Hay, "it isn't funny. I find the whole affair ghastly—ghastly! How in the world shall I ever persuade her that you and I have really been playing parts? It's all very well for you to laugh. You understand these things—I don't. I confess I have no gift for psychology. I'm clean out of it. Personally, I can't see how it is possible for her to be so easily deceived. I suppose you do?"

"Of course! I'm not a blind bat of a man, thank goodness." Mrs. Billy grew suddenly grave, and, leaning forward, put a kind hand on Hay's arm. "The truth of it is, dear Archie, that she loves you."

"She's a precious peculiar way of showing it," replied Archie, bitterly.

"Oh, lots of us are like that! The point of the whole thing is as clear as daylight. Vi has been too certain of you. She has believed that nothing she could do or say could ever make you leave off caring for her."

"And she's right. I am more in love with her to-day than when we married."

Mrs. Billy looked roguishly at him.

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"That, my dear Archie," she said, "is brought home to me with almost stunning force every time I try to induce you to even pretend to make love to me. You constantly jeopardize my lovely plan! But, you see, Viola has known it, too—up to this walk, and that has been one of your mistakes. Still, with your continued assistance, I am working this out fairly well. I honestly believe that I shall be the cause of your lifelong happiness before many days have passed."

Hay looked wistfully at her. "Do you, Mrs. Billy? I shall be your grateful admirer to the end of time."

"Bless you, I also mean to be happy. Some day, when our domestic hearths glisten peacefully again, I shall settle down with a packet of quills and a pound of foolscap, and write a handbook for the use of married people on, 'How Much Rope to Allow One's Better-Half.'"

Hay paced the room for three or four moments in silence. "I must be a poor sort of husband," he said, at last, "to drive my wife to flirt with another man."

"You see, my dear friend, you don't tell your wife of your adoration quite often enough."

Hay stopped, and stared at Peg in amazement. "But, my dear Mrs. Billy, I tell her frequently."

"Frequently," said Mrs. Hutton, oracularly, "is not often enough for a woman. She requires to be told all the time—vividly, picturesquely. The mistake you have made has been that you have maintained a too placidly contented appearance. You have taken things for granted—and you should never take things for granted with a woman. It fills her with a void—so she flirts. By flirting with Billy, Viola has been trying to stir that calm, soldier-man exterior of yours. Poor dear, I'm afraid she's having a very bad time, in consequence."

"I hope not."

"It's a splendid tonic for her. So it is for my old man."

Hay turned to her, quickly. "By

the way," he asked, "what on earth has Billy done with himself?"

Mrs. Billy broke into a little laugh. "What a funny old thing he is!"

"Don't you feel a little nervous about him? I don't want to frighten you, but suppose he . . . well, you know, Mrs. Billy, when a man's down on his luck, a river has an awful fascination."

Mrs. Billy's laugh became almost hilarious. "Oh, dear, how funny! Oh, Archie, my dear, how comic! Billy hurt himself? Billy? Oh, ho, ho!"

"Well, I'm glad you take it in that way," said Hay.

"Don't you really know Billy better than that?"

"I only know how I should feel under these circumstances. If you hadn't made me hope there was a chance in this plan of yours, I might have been tempted to go pretty near the river myself."

"Oh," said Mrs. Billy, with her head on one side, "but then, you see, you take everything very seriously, whereas my Billy does not. He is a thoroughly happy, most charming, and very lovable person, but he is also an ego-tist, and, oh, so careful never to hurt himself."

"Still, I wish I could think why he went away, and where he's gone."

"I can tell you. He went, because the first thing he hates is being uncomfortable; and the situation . . . well, it was that! Then, he naturally anticipated some awkward explanation with Viola, and he hates explanations. So he is trusting to me to lift him out of the muddy little pool he has jumped into, dry him and brush him down, wash his face and hands, and dress him up in a nice, clean collar and tie. He was shocked on Monday, miserable on Tuesday, irritable on Wednesday, fidgety on Thursday, and by this morning he has braced himself up to explain to Viola how mistaken they've been—unless, by some chance, he meets me first, and then he'll call upon me to explain for him."

A look of supreme astonishment

crept into Hay's face. "How on earth do you know all this?" he asked.

"Not by clairvoyance," said Mrs. Billy, "but through the medium of the post."

"So he's been writing to you, has he?"

"I've had a letter from him every morning."

"Where's he been, Mrs. Billy?"

"In bed, my friend."

"In bed? Good heavens!"

"He has spent the last four days in bed."

"By Jove!"

Mrs. Billy gave up one whole minute to laughter. Her very fingers seemed to issue her sense of amusement.

"Billy always goes to bed when he has made things uncomfortable for himself," she said. "And now, having proved by his absence from Viola at such a trying moment, how ephemeral were his feelings for her, and as his repeated commands for my presence at his bedside have for the first time been utterly ignored, he has announced his intention of coming to fetch me to-day."

"Fetch you!" cried Hay, with a very genuine touch of fright. "Will you go?"

"My dear Archie, I am going to leave him in his little muddy pool for quite a long time, so that in the future he may look upon muddy water as singularly unhealthy, and—avoid it."

A step sounded on the path. Hay started, and held up his finger. "Is that Viola?"

Mrs. Billy smiled sympathetically. "How well you know her step! I didn't hear a sound."

"I know the touch of her hand on the door; I know the sound of her breath; her step is like a voice to me."

"You'll be happy one day," said Mrs. Billy, gently; "I know you will."

Hay showed more emotion than ever Mrs. Billy had seen him do before. "Pray God you're right," he said. "I have been hideously to blame to let her get into such a state of mind as to feel the necessity for flirtation—to

need some one else to tell her how beautiful she is. You've taught me something, Mrs. Billy. You've made me realize that a man should never sink the worship of the lover in the common-sense, every-day love of the husband. The discipline that demands no sign of feeling is destruction to happiness. . . . If only I hadn't lost her! If only I'm in time!"

He turned to the window, and listened.

"Is she coming?" asked Mrs. Billy.

"Yes," he said.

"Then," cried Mrs. Billy, excitedly, "come here quickly, and sit on the arm of my chair."

Hay paused, irresolutely. "I'm not ungrateful, Mrs. Billy; you know that, but must we go on—?"

"Of course we must. Why, we've scarcely begun! Be plucky! You promised to see it through. Quickly!"

He did as he was told, grudgingly.

"Now," continued Mrs. Billy, rapidly, "put your arm over the back, and when Vi comes in, urge me wildly to kiss you. I shall tease you in the orthodox way, and refuse. When you feel that she is well in the room, remove my arm and plant a kiss on my cheek a good inch away from my ear."

She leaned back in the corner of her chair, as arranged.

Viola entered.

XI

THERE is nothing so irritating to a jealous wife as to see the other woman refuse her husband's kisses. So peculiar is the jealous temperament, so unreasonable, that a wife suffers far less pain, if the other accepts the husband's kisses with avidity.

With most people, jealousy is not an overwhelming dislike to see the person they love bestow favors upon others, so much as the lurking fear that they wish to do so, and don't. It may be ill-bred, it may be bad form for a man to kiss, in the presence of his wife, a woman who is no relation, but the wife seldom minds. What she does

most strongly object to is the fact that he does *not* kiss the woman in her presence when she knows that he desires very keenly to do it, and she thinks that he will undoubtedly do so behind her back.

It comes to this: there is no jealousy where there is complete trust. Where, oh, my masters, can you put your hand on a man and a woman and say, "These two people trust each other"?

For some minutes, Viola stood watching her husband and her old friend with an expression of resentfulness, disgust and black jealousy.

The stage had lost an extremely clever leading lady in Peg. Her acting of the ingénue in love was superb. She laughed shyly, and dashed quick, inviting glances, and moved her head now to one side, now to another.

"No, Archie, no!" she said, in an affected tone of reproof. "You've surely kissed me enough for one day!"

"Just one more, Peg, please."

"No," she replied, putting her hands against his face, "not another one. Not half-a-quarter of one. You've worn a positive hole in my cheek already in these four days—a perfect pit."

"Why have such a lovely cheek, then? Don't be unkind. Just one more."

"Well, then," said Peg, giddily, "the eighth-of-a-sixteenth of one."

Very unwillingly, Hay bent down and kissed her cheek lightly.

Viola put some account books on her desk, and spoke in a cold, regular voice.

"I trust I shall not disturb you?"

Peg gave an affected little squeal.

"Oh, Archie, get up; it's Viola."

Hay made a willing effort to do so, but was held tight by Peg, who whispered, "Keep still, stupid! Say something sweet."

"Don't be such a prude, Peg; I shall stay where I am."

Peg giggled. "No, I'd really rather you didn't. We shall disturb Viola."

Hay made another movement, and found himself held fast.

Viola chose a pen in a deliberate

fashion. "I came to do my accounts," she said, "but I dare say they can wait."

Peg turned her head over her shoulder, with a sweet smile.

"Oh, *please* go on with them," she said. "We'll be as quiet as mice, won't we, darling?"

"You're a jolly little mouse," he replied, with a painful attempt at levity that nearly choked Mrs. Billy.

Viola sat down, and crossed her hands in her lap. "I will wait until you have finished with the room," she said.

Instantly, Peg jumped up. "Oh, then we'll go into the garden. We couldn't possibly keep you from your accounts. Keep it up," she added, under her breath, to Archie.

Hay hesitated. At the best, he was a good amateur actor. To continue to play so long and so trying a part was almost beyond him.

"The sun's not so hot," he said; "suppose we go out in the punt."

"I should love it. But your hair's all rough, sweetheart," she added, with a touch of admirable theatricality. "Bend down."

Hay felt, and looked, horribly uncomfortable. He glanced at his wife, and saw a hard glitter in her eyes, a tight compression of her lips. A great wave of love went out to her, and he longed to fling himself on his knees by her chair and take her in his arms. With an inward feeling of exultation, he became almost convinced that Viola, as Peg assured him, was jealous of him; and if she was jealous, how could she love Hutton?

Barely five seconds passed, while he was arguing to himself, and before he could reply to Peg she had mounted on a foot-stool, and commenced to smooth his hair with her hands.

"How rough some kinds of hair get!" she said, watching the effect on Viola with satisfaction. "That's better. It's beautiful hair—quite the kind I like best. I hope you'll never lose it. Do you think you will?" Then she whispered, "Keep it up—do. Everything's going splendidly."

"Barbers assure me not," said Hay, taking up his part again. "I shall go gray pretty soon, though."

Peg clapped her hands with an exact imitation of the stage ingénue.

"Oh," she cried, "but I shall adore you with gray hair! I shall bleach mine when yours gets white. Sha'n't we be a jolly old couple?" She put her hand lovingly to his lips. "Kiss it," she commanded, in an undertone.

Hay kissed it. "You—you darling," he said, feebly.

Viola rose to her feet, and stood facing them icily. Her effort to repress her anger added two years to her appearance.

"I was going to ask you if you would care to have the launch and supper at Skinner's to-night. The McIvors want to come, too. We could all come back by moonlight."

Peg looked at Hay, and then at Viola, and pretended to stutter like a girl newly engaged.

"Oh," she said, "it's very kind, and—and we should both have liked it very much, but—and it would have been very jolly—but we—to tell you the truth—we thought—but, of course, if Archie would prefer— Would you, Archie? . . . Say no," she whispered.

Hay looked resolutely out of the window. "I thought we had arranged to punt to the lock and watch the sun set," he said.

"So we had, and take supper with us. So I'm afraid we can't join you, Viola; thanks very much."

"You are going alone in the punt?" she asked, very distinctly.

"You and Billy spent nearly ten days alone in the punt, didn't you?"

Viola's face flamed. "Will you give me your orders as to your supper?" she said.

The moment she had made the remark, Peg deeply regretted it. It sounded so gratuitously cruel. She made two steps toward Viola to beg her pardon, which would have brought down the curtain on the play she and Hay were so strenuously playing for the good of Hutton and Viola.

Hay saw what she was about to do. He put his hand quickly on her arm, and spoke carelessly to his wife.

"It would be kind if you would order two suppers for us," he said. "Just one of your specially nice suppers. Come, Peg, we are wasting this exquisite morning. Shall I take a book for you?"

Mrs. Billy had regained possession of her histrionic abilities. "Just as though it would be the least use," she cried, archly. "You know you will not let me read a single word. . . . He's a delightful companion, isn't he, Viola? . . . Oh, I beg your pardon, but I'm afraid he'll break the arm of every chair in the house. Dear old Archie! is he impatient to get on the river with his sweetheart, then?"

She took his arm, and together they went on the veranda. Archie Hay looked over his shoulder at his wife, whose back was toward him, and kissed his hand. He was the most miserable man in England.

XII

FOR a quarter of an hour by the clock, Viola Hay remained where she had been left. Her face was white and set, and there was an angry line between her eyebrows. She listened to the sound of Peg's rippling laugh so long as it remained in the air. She did not turn to watch the two across the sun-splashed lawn; her eyes were fixed on the floor.

There came suddenly a look of resolution into them, and she went swiftly to the bell, and rang impatiently.

Stanner found her seated at her desk, writing a telegram. She wrote more precisely, with a firmer, bolder touch than ever before.

"I am leaving home this evening," she said. "See that my things are packed for a long stay, please."

"Yes'm," said Stanner, with a little start.

"Order the carrier to fetch the trunks that will not go on the brougham."

"Yes'm."

"I suppose you can get the packing done in time for the nine-thirty?"

"Oh, yes'm!"

"Then tell Dibben to come round at nine."

"Yes'm."

"I shall dine alone in the boudoir."

"Yes'm."

"Tell cook to have a cold supper packed in the hamper—the supper Major Hay was so pleased with some weeks ago. Cook will remember. And tell her to be particularly careful in packing the aspics. Ask her to place the champagne on ice. It had better be at the boat-house at nine."

"Yes'm." Stanner's eyes gleamed with excitement.

"I will travel in my gray coat and hat."

"Yes'm."

"Have this telegram sent to the Coburg Hotel."

"Yes'm."

"That's all, thank you."

Stanner took the telegram, and left the room, with her eyebrows disappearing into her fringe.

Billy Hutton looked into the room, gloomily.

XIII

WITH an exclamation of relief and delight, Viola ran to him and put her arm through his.

"Oh, Billy!" she cried, with a suspicion of tears in her voice, "how glad, how glad, I am to see you again!"

Billy looked around uneasily, and tried to release his arm.

"Take care, Viola; some one may be looking."

But Viola was too glad to have some one to speak to after her four lonely, painful days, to notice Billy's utterly changed manner.

"I can't tell you how much I've missed you—how lonely I've been here. What I've had to endure, what I've had to put up with, no one can realize. You, at any rate, love me, and I want your protection and your

help. Why did you go away? Where have you been?"

"In London," replied Billy, sulkily, "on business."

"What! all the time?" Viola spoke as if the four days had been a month.

"Yes," said Billy again; "full of work. I say, Vi, don't hold on to me like this, there's a good girl. Suppose the others saw? Where's Peg?"

"Why, with Archie, of course."

Billy disengaged his arm roughly, and crossed the room with a barely smothered oath.

Viola, still unable to realize the change in Billy's manner, followed.

"I've been so miserable without you," she said. "Have you been thinking of me all this time?"

Billy stared at her in surprise. Here was a different Viola! Here was a Viola with appeal in her voice and tears in her eyes. This was not the unruffled, assured woman of the world he had left so hurriedly.

"My dear child," he said, anxiously, "what's come over you? You're not usually so—so clinging!"

"I am so afraid my undemonstrative manner chilled you—drove you away. I am trying to alter, dear. I'm so thankful you've come back! We've so much to discuss, so much to arrange for the future."

Horribly uncomfortable, Hutton took up an uncompromising position on the bear's skin in front of the fireplace, and pulled his mustache.

"Look here, Viola," he said, "I think you ought not to talk to me like this. It won't do, you know. Forgive my being—er—quite frank, but we mustn't have a repetition of Monday, whatever happens. That kind of thing makes one feel a complete ass. Of course, as you, no doubt, quite well understand, the whole thing was mere fun on both our parts, utterly misunderstood by Hay and—and my wife . . . Oh, Lord, where is Peg?"

An extraordinary metamorphosis took place in Viola's expression. She stepped a couple of paces backward, and turned on the discomfited man a

pair of eyes blazing with anger and wounded pride.

"Your wife is carrying out her compact with my husband with remarkable effect," she said, with biting sarcasm. "They are far more fond and foolish than we ever were, and have none of your false modesty. So far, indeed, from fearing observation, they seek it. They make love to each other in front of other people like a nursemaid and a postman."

"What!" cried Billy.

"In fact, I have never seen a clearer case of infatuation. Your wife's behavior is almost indelicate."

Hutton looked about him, wildly.

"There's a mistake—there must be a mistake. Peg's never looked at another man! Besides, I wrote and told her I'd given you up."

"I beg your pardon?"

Hutton adopted a highly moral tone. "My dear child, it's best to look the matter straight in the face. It was wrong—the whole thing was wrong. Don't you see that yourself now?"

Mrs. Hay laughed, sarcastically. "Isn't it rather late to think of that?" she asked.

"It's never too late. You and I have come to our senses."

"And our respective better-halves have lost theirs." Viola's voice rose. "They spend the whole day in each other's arms. They call each other by every term of endearment. They are never apart from morning till night. As a blind for the servants, my husband sleeps in the bachelor-room of the boat-house."

For the moment, Hutton was too shocked to speak. "How appalling! how awful!" he said, at last.

Viola turned on him, sharply. "Is this sudden morality of yours due to the change of air?" she asked.

"Change of what?" asked Billy, too worried and upset to remember his story of work in London.

"They are merely living up to their compact," continued Viola. "What can it matter to you? You gave up everything for my sake, if you remember, 'for ever and ever.' If those are

not your own words, they were something to that effect. They are now giving us every chance."

"Chance! What do you mean?"

"I presume you intend to lead your life with me now?"

Hutton's amazement under any other circumstances would have been amusing. "What!" he gasped. "Stop living with Peg? Spoil my life with Peg? Ruin her happiness for the sake of that kind of thing?"

Viola's anger became scathing. "Did you intend to ruin *my* life, if you could have persuaded me, without any idea of sacrificing your own? Were you merely intent on having your own way without the least intention of paying for it?"

"Why drag in that? I've given up all idea of love-making, so far as you are concerned."

"Thank you very much. But I greatly fear that you will be forced by circumstances to take it up again."

"Never!" said Hutton, forcibly. "I must see Peg at once."

"You can't. She is on the river with my husband. No, it's no use your going away. You may as well stay here and face things. You have come to a wall this time, my friend, and there is no turning to the right or left. There's only one way. You must turn back—and find me, Billy."

She moved quickly to his side. He realized that she was now filled with only one idea—to revenge herself on Peg, at whatever cost to herself.

"I am ready to go with you wherever you wish. I am ready to be yours, as you so much wanted me to be four days ago. And you must take me—you *must*."

Billy was by no means too self-centered not to be able to see that Viola was saying things she didn't really mean; that she was carried away and overwrought by the turn events had taken.

He took her hand kindly. "My dear child," he said, soothingly, "I'm afraid you don't understand. This has been a great shock to me. I now realize fully what a huge mistake it was to

flirt with you. But I can't consent, although I am awfully sorry for you, to ruin Peg's whole life. It isn't possible. You are asking too much."

"You must leave Peg out of it! Through you I have lost my husband. Do you know what that means to me?"

"My case is the same," said Hutton, gently. "My wife loves me. She is only piqued because she thinks I no longer love her."

Viola went off into a shriek of angry, hysterical laughter. "Loves you—you? You mad egotist! Would any woman think twice of you with a man like Archie in the question? Archie has lost his head over Peg. Do you suppose she can resist him?"

"There's no question of resistance. I tell you she loves *me*!"

"And in regard to me? What is to become of me? You run away to avoid an uncomfortable situation; you stay away for four days, and then you return to make it up with your wife—is that it?"

Hutton lost his temper. "Yes," he said, "it is."

"You make a very big mistake. I leave here to-night, and so do you. These two shall be left to themselves."

Hutton became almost voiceless. "Leave my wife alone with your husband?" he stammered. "You must be mad to think I could do such a thing."

"You'll find there is method in my madness. Do you, for one instant, suppose that I am the kind of woman to be played with? Do you, for one instant, suppose that I am the kind of woman to let a man treat me as you have treated me, and then leave me?"

"No, no!" said Hutton. "Of course not. You'll do all you can to prevent him from spoiling Peg's life."

Viola stamped her foot. "On the contrary. You will assist me to ruin your wife's life. Am I to be thrown aside, to be trampled under foot by you, as well as by my husband, for the sake of this insignificant woman? Oh, you fair-weather friend! The first touch of discomfort, the first irritating breath of wind that blows upon you,

and you shrivel up! You return crying to your wife to shelter you! But she shall not! You have violated my trust in you, and I will punish you if I have to ruin myself. I am going to divorce my husband—and your wife shall be co-respondent."

Hutton lost all self-control, and seized Viola by the wrists.

"You devil! Peg shall never be dragged through the courts at the instance of such a woman as you."

"You think not?" cried Viola, freeing herself with a quick gesture, and going swiftly to the door. "How will you stop me?"

"I'll—I'll kill you first!"

With a peal of derisive laughter, Viola opened the door.

"Ho! you comfortable coward, you superlative egotist! You'll kill me, will you? Try, try, try!"

XIV

ONE laughs a good deal at the language put into the mouths of characters in melodramas. One is immensely amused at what one sarcastically calls its unreality. One would be infinitely annoyed to be told that when under the stress of emotion brought about by money troubles, domestic upsets, wounded vanity and a hundred other reasons, one says pretty much the same things as these very melodrama characters written by some uneducated hack writer with nothing to bless himself with but a keen sense of the stage.

Yet ninety-nine out of a hundred of us talk more wildly, more superlatively, more ungrammatically every day of our lives over the loss of a collar-stud, the indiscretion of the cook, the erraticalness of the weather, or the fatuity of the War Office, than any character in melodrama. Under these conditions, we lose our sense of perspective and regard ourselves as mountains, everybody else as mole-hills. The veneer of civilization and a polite up-bringing disappears, and we stand forth in all our vulgarity and primality.

Count the number of "heavy fathers" you know, who lose all sense of humor and restraint, and curse and swear all over the house because some one has removed a penny lead-pencil from such and such a drawer in their desk while, all the while, it is more than probably reposing in their own pocket. Count, if you have the patience, the number of elderly "utility ladies," who gnash their teeth and call on people to witness the momentary approaching end of the world because some one in the house happens to come down a quarter of an hour late for breakfast. Think of the number of "leading men" you have met who call on heaven to witness the fact that they are "off their drive," and who wish they were dead when their long-overdue tailor's bill is presented for immediate payment by the Tradesmen's Protection Society. Consider the number of "leading ladies" there are who will tell you that you can save them from ruin if you will only catch the post with a postcard to a laundress, reprimanding her for a superabundance of starch, or who will announce to a startled world that they don't care how soon they die because there is a slight fullness in the waist of a newly-arrived frock.

There is just as much life in melodrama as there is in melodrama in life, the only difference between the two being that in melodrama the characters become bombastic over big things, and in life over quite unimportant ones.

This all goes to prove the necessity of assiduously cultivating the power of being able to look at ourselves from the outside—in other words, in cultivating a sense of humor. This sense is the only one which can save us from appearing egregious idiots, and it is the only sense which is utterly neglected. If it were taught us at our mother's knee, rubbed into us at school and the 'varsity, and preached from the pulpit, murder would practically disappear, divorce become a thing of the past, and libel actions would seldom find a place in the list of cases. The quick application of a

sense of humor can turn even the most melodramatic situation into one of pure comedy.

If Viola Hay could have seen how ridiculous she looked when she swung Billy Hutton aside, she would never have given such a consummately good imitation of "The Worst Woman in London" when she banged the door behind her after crying, "Try, try, try!"

XV

A FEW hours later found Hutton and Mrs. Hay alone again in the breakfast-room.

A gorgeous sunset, almost pantomimic in its coloring, was taking place, to the piping accompaniment of a full orchestra of birds.

The sky in the west had already undergone many rapid changes. Gold had turned into crimson, and the river no longer looked a stream of silver, but one of blood. All nature seemed to be watching the sun's triumphant progress. The breeze, enraptured, had forgotten to play among the leaves and grasses. Roses turned their faces up to watch; jasmine and clematis, honeysuckle and periwinkle and geranium leaned forward in order not to lose one detail of the spectacle. Daisies, buttercups and dandelions, the great lower class in the world of flowers, seemed to stand on tiptoe. Pansies were all eyes.

The only people too occupied with ego to see anything but themselves, were Billy and Viola. He paced up and down one end of the room, and she the other.

Neither spoke a word until the crimson had paled and the birds had finished their cantata. Then Hutton stopped in front of the clock, and uttered a smothered exclamation.

"You haven't horsewhipped my husband yet, I suppose?" asked Viola, with a sneer.

"Haven't had the opportunity," said Hutton, without looking at her.

"What a pity! They've come back, you know."

Hutton stopped, abruptly. "Come back? When?"

"Half an hour ago."

"Why?"

"To change for their cold supper. I should think that your wife will probably simplify matters by catching her death of cold. Evening dress in a punt! It's ridiculous!"

"I don't see why," said Hutton, shortly. "She has a warm cloak. It cost me fifty guineas. If she chooses to change, why shouldn't she?"

Viola shot out a laugh. "Oh, quite so! She can please herself. Some women don't mind looking foolish."

"Peg couldn't look foolish if she tried," muttered Billy, with a kind of sulky loyalty.

"Oh!"

"It's too absurd of Hay to think of punting in evening clothes. It's only done by lunatics and cavalry subalterns. He'll look a perfect fool." He commenced to pace the room again.

"I can't agree with you," said Viola, coldly. "It is impossible for Archie ever to look a fool, whatever he does. If he likes to preserve the cleanly habit of a change in the evening, why shouldn't he?"

Hutton kicked the leg of an unoffending chair viciously. "No reason at all. There's no law in this free country to prevent a man from making a fool of himself. What time will they be back from this full-dress moonlight picnic?"

"I haven't the least idea."

A silence fell. A perceptible shadow crept into the room. A party of merry people went down the river in an electric launch, singing a catch. Their voices, unaccompanied by any instrument, lingered musically upon the sleepy air, and finally died away. A solitary blackbird piped shrilly. Far away in the distance, the church clock intoned the hour. Lesser voices of clocks in the bungalow hastened to corroborate.

Hutton broke the silence.

"Are you going to your boudoir?" he asked, politely.

"No," said Mrs. Hay, with equal politeness.

"Going to stay here?"

"If you have no objection."

"Oh, no. I only thought that you must be getting tired. You seem to be taking a lot of exercise."

"I hope I don't bother you?"

"Good Lord, no! I was only thinking of your health."

Viola smiled disagreeably. "Very sweet of you," she said. "My health is vigorous, thanks very much. When you get tired, that chair is a most comfortable one."

Hutton disliked chaff more than anything else in the world. He pulled up short and looked at Viola doubtfully. "My prowling gets on your nerves, I'm afraid?"

"Oh, no! But I know how tired one gets after—long walks."

Hutton sat down instantly.

Viola looked relieved and a little triumphant. "You will remain on here, of course?" she said.

"Of course," returned Hutton, with decision.

"Of course," scornfully echoed Viola. "And when your wife takes my husband to your house, you will trot along after them."

Hutton looked up quickly. "To my house? What on earth do you mean?"

"That's the arrangement, you know."

"Is it? I'd like to see Hay put his nose inside my door!"

"For all his reserve of manner, my husband can be a very pleasant companion."

Hutton leaped out of his chair. "Pleasant companion!" he cried.

Viola watched him go to the window, tear a handful of leaves away from a youthful creeper, and fling them over the veranda.

"Well, you see," she added, in a matter-of-fact voice, "you don't intend to take any notice of these—well, unconventional proceedings, and so, doubtless, you will share the same roof. I dare say you will soon get used to it. Habit is a wonderful thing, and I can imagine my husband making a charming *ami de maison*."

Hutton became almost breathless.

"Mrs. Hay," he said, "I must ask you not to stand there and make these frightful suggestions. You—you take my breath away."

"But that's the arrangement, you know," she reiterated. "The pity of it is that after I have divorced my husband, you will be in the way of his marrying your wife."

"He shall never marry my wife!" cried Billy, almost hysterically.

"But that's the arrangement, you know." Mrs. Hay repeated the words as though they were a text. "Is it quite sporting of you to prevent it?"

"Sporting!"

"As your wife will be bound to appear in the divorce-court, she may insist on your divorcing her and settling the whole thing at one sitting. They are marvelously devoted—quite a boy-and-girl love-affair."

Billy began to be sensibly affected by the insidious way in which Viola made her points. From being pathetic, he grew angry.

"The way they're behaving," he said, loudly, "is simply disgraceful. It's worse than that—it's revolting. It's—it's—it's the scandal of the neighborhood."

"Of course it is. I shall certainly be able to call plenty of witnesses."

"They are out at all times of the day and night alone in a punt—in a punt, mind!"

"They think nothing of that," said Mrs. Hay, watching him closely.

"And the way they go on in the house is—is bean-feasty. It's shocking! It's horrible!"

"Oh, yes, it's all that. You've a very clear case. But," she added, preparing to shoot her final arrow, "you won't take any steps, naturally."

Hutton whipped around. "Why sha'n't I?"

"You have made up your mind, I gather, to wink at the immorality of it all."

"By gad, I haven't!"

"It suits my purpose well enough. I have no wish for you to divorce your wife. It will serve her right not to be able to marry Archie."

"Look here, Mrs. Hay," exclaimed Billy, "I have no intention of being made a catspaw in this matter. Whatever your opinion of this may be, I am not one of those men who condone flagrant immorality."

Viola had succeeded. If a woman wants to make an obstinate man go her way, she has only to pretend to pull him the other. It is called the policy of the pig.

"No?" she asked. "But what will you do?"

"Go up to-night, and help you institute proceedings."

It was well that it was nearly dark. Otherwise, Hutton would have seen a look of triumph flood Viola's beautiful face, and he then would have guessed that she had been working all the time to get him to say and think this.

"I suppose," she said, simulating indifference very cleverly, "that there's no dissuading you when once you have made up your mind?"

"In this case, certainly not."

"At any rate, I am going up by the nine-thirty. You had better share my brougham. Will it take you long to pack?"

"No; I can chuck my things together."

Mrs. Hay struggled to retain her indifference.

"Very well, then, we will travel to London together, and then go to different hotels. Mine is the Coburg. I suppose yours will be the Carlton?"

"That will do as well as another," said Billy, wishing to goodness he hadn't agreed.

Mrs. Hay opened the door.

"There will be some food in the boudoir in a few minutes. Perhaps you had better have some," she said.

XVI

VIOLA's mind was made up. In the usual human manner, she had completely forgotten that her conduct had been the cause of all this unpleasantness. She never for a moment gave a thought to the fact that but for her

behavior with Billy nothing would have happened. She never for a moment realized that Archie and Peg were only doing precisely the same things that she and Billy had done, four short days before. She only considered how she had been treated. All she could think about was what, in her mind, she called Archie's disloyalty. But she didn't blame her husband so much as she blamed Mrs. Hutton. If you had asked her the reason of this, she would have had no other argument to put forward than, "because she did." A woman can always find excuses for a man, but she can never find a single one for a woman. And the fact that she may not be so much to blame as the man, only adds strength to her condemnation of the woman.

Revenge was the light that burned in front of Viola. She would be even with Peg, she said to herself, come what might. How dared she put her hands in her husband's and agree to his proposition? Any really nice woman would have refused at once, finally. How dared she take advantage of Archie's momentary weakness, and play with his sympathies as she had done? Beyond all, far beyond all, how dared she put up her hand and refuse to allow him to kiss her when he wanted to do so?

"Yes," she said to herself, over and over again, "I will be even with Peg." And so here she was, as kind-hearted, as charming, as well-bred a woman as one could wish to meet, making her preparation to institute proceedings which would divorce her from the one man in all the world whom she loved with her whole heart. Here she was, with a kind of fierce triumph, watching the packing of her trunks in order that, for the first time since their marriage, she might leave the husband she adored.

Of course, as you well know, revenge was not really the reason actuating Viola in her decision. It was that desire for martyrdom which is at the bottom of most of the utterly foolish things we men and women do in our little lives. It was what is colloqui-

ally known as spoiling one's face to spite one's nose—a foolish and a painful process, by which nothing is gained.

XVII

LEFT alone, Billy sat down in the nearest chair, and wished with all his heart that he had never been born. He didn't arrive at this conclusion quite at once. It was led up to by a number of wishes.

First of all, he wished he had never known Hay. They had been close friends since they were mutually eleven. He had looked upon Archie as one of the best. But he had behaved in a manner which had made it impossible for him to be classed among officers and gentlemen. Would any really decent chap spend hours alone in a punt with another man's wife?

Then he wished he had never met Viola. He owned to himself that she was very beautiful, with an extraordinary fascination, but it was impossible to get away from the fact that she had wilfully led him on. How was it possible for him to have kissed her if she had made up her mind not to allow him to do so? Flirtation with her meant nothing more, so far as he was concerned, he told himself, than a desire to kill time, pleasantly. Of course, his sense of the artistic had been appealed to by her beauty, but what harm was there in being an artist?

Then he wished that the Hays' expensive and complete bungalow had been at the bottom of the river; and then, with a feeling of dull anger and disgust, that he had never been persuaded by Viola to go up to London and help her to drag Peg—the best wife any man in this world ever had—through those horrible courts; finally, like all slightly fleshy men, with susceptible natures and self-indulgent characteristics, that he had never been born.

He had no time to arrive at any further conclusions before he heard Hay enter the room with a quick, light step.

The room was by this time quite dark. Hutton jumped up, breathing hard.

Hay touched the electric buttons, and stood facing him in a blaze of light.

XVIII

"Oh, you're back, then?" said Archie, looking immaculately cool in evening clothes.

"I regret being obliged to trespass on your hospitality—" began Billy.

"Not at all," replied Hay. "Have a cigarette."

Hutton glared at him. "No, thanks. I have only returned to pack my things, and take myself off."

"Oh!" said Hay, lighting a cigarette. "Must you go?"

His imperturbability, his effrontery, as Billy inwardly called it, infuriated Hutton. He went up to Hay and stood in front of him, quivering with rage.

"I have known you pretty well for fifteen years," he said, "but if any one had told me you were this kind of chap I should have knocked him down."

"What kind of chap?" asked Hay, quietly.

Hutton's feelings of righteous indignation rose like a tidal wave. "The kind of chap," he shouted, "who ruins a friend's home by taking away his wife."

Hay blew out a cloud of tobacco smoke, and thoughtfully threw the ash of his cigarette into the grate. "It would interest me to know what you call that kind of chap."

"I call him what every decent-minded man calls him—a detestable blackguard."

"So do I," replied Hay, looking straight into Hutton's angry eyes.

"And yet," Hutton continued, at the top of his voice, "that's what you have deliberately done. Not content with ruining my home, you've smashed up the perfect relationship which existed between me and my wife, and driven her into the worst path a woman can ever enter."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Hay, with a faint smile. "How?"

"How? How? You appeal to her sentimentality, you take her out in a punt—a punt, mind you—morning, noon and night, you kiss her openly and you carry on like a love-sick calf on his honeymoon. That's how you've done it. And what's the consequence?"

"Tell me. I'm exceedingly interested."

Hutton became almost eloquent. "You've broken your wife's heart, you've turned her into a hard, bitter woman. You've made me a sour, disappointed man, and you will be the cause of dragging my wife through the divorce-court. That's what you've done, and I call it low—low!"

Hay held himself in with a supreme effort of will. "Oh!" he said. "And so you call it low, do you?"

"Yes, I do!" cried Hutton, in a fever of indignation and moral rectitude. "And what the devil do you mean by it?"

Hay pitched his cigarette out of one of the windows, and leaned over the back of a chair toward Hutton. When he spoke there was an undercurrent of anger in his voice which made it tremble.

"What the devil did *you* mean by your behavior with my wife when you carried her away, day after day, and when you held her in your arms in the backwater a hundred yards from here?"

With an air of intense surprise, Hutton drew back a step. "Nothing," he replied; "absolutely nothing. It was the merest flirtation. I often do it. You can't say that *I've* done anything."

"I can tell you what you have just escaped doing. You have just escaped doing precisely those things which you accuse me of having done, and if you hadn't chanced to possess the truest, straightest, most loyal little woman in the world, the only woman I have ever known with a sense of humor, you would have landed all of us in that divorce-court you talk

so much about, by the very thing you call a flirtation."

"I—I—" Billy gasped.

Hay's voice broke a little. "It meant nothing to you—all this. You merely passed the time. But I am one of those miserable beggars who are cursed with the most horrible of all characteristics—jealousy, and this flirtation of yours was driving the blood into my brain, making the sun black and my whole life wretched."

There was no longer any aggression about Billy. He was thoroughly and completely ashamed of himself. He had never before seen his old friend so deeply moved, or heard him make a confession of his feelings so frank, so whole-hearted. But he made one final attempt.

"And—and what about me?" he asked.

"What about you?" said Hay, lightly. "Find your wife, my dear chap, and ask her to explain the workings of the little game we've been playing."

"Game?"

"Yes, man, game. We've been pretending to do exactly what you were doing in earnest."

Billy was completely flabbergasted.

"Play-acting, do you mean?"

"Precisely."

"But why?"

"To give you a chance of seeing how you liked the thing you made us endure."

A sort of mist fell away from Billy's eyes. He clapped his hands on his knees, and broke into a roar of laughter.

"But you didn't calculate on being taken seriously, did you? Of course," he added, with an inimitable touch of effrontery, "I knew all along, and I played up for all I was worth, just for the fun of the thing. . . . But what about your wife? Do you know what this play-acting of yours has driven her to?"

"What do you mean?" asked Hay, showing symptoms of alarm.

Hutton went off into irrepressible laughter. "Look in the hall—that's all I ask you to do."

"What's the matter with the hall?"
 "Bit by bit, all the luggage Vi has is being jabbed down in the hall to catch the nine-thirty to Paddington!"

"What?" gasped Hay.

"The biter fairly bit, by Jove! Splendid! Ho, ho, ho! Splendid!"

Hutton's laughter reverberated in the room, remained in the veranda and followed him across the lawn.

Hay waited a moment, afraid to look in the hall. Then, with a run, he crossed the room and flung back the door.

There, carefully labeled and strapped, reposed, impatiently, three dress trunks, three hat-boxes and a jewel-case. Upon each was painted the magic letters, "V. H."

XIX

"ARE you all alone, Archie?" asked Mrs. Billy, in her merriest voice.

She found Hay, profoundly moved, staring at the trunks.

"Vi's going," he said. "She's leaving me."

Peg examined the labels, and saw that they were all addressed to the Coburg Hotel.

"Stuff and nonsense!" she said. "She's taking a leaf out of our book. She's pretending."

"No; she is in earnest. Billy's just told me so."

"Dear old Billy!"

"She's dressing to catch the nine-thirty to Paddington."

"I don't believe it," said Peg. "I'm prepared to bet you a nice new pipe that all these things are empty. Try them, and see for yourself. I'm going up for my cloak. I won't keep you a minute."

But Hay didn't try them; he was afraid. He could see pretty plainly that the psychological moment had arrived. He realized with infinite relief and thankfulness that, as a factor in the affair, Billy no longer counted. There was no longer any reason for jealousy. But no one knew better than he that Vi seldom forgave people

who wounded her vanity. They might spread false reports about her, they might criticize unfavorably the management of her *ménage*; she snapped her fingers at such things. Let them, however, tread on her self-conceit, and she became a tigress.

No woman so hated tricks played upon her as she. Practical-joking she held in abhorrence. Even chaff she could not tolerate. What would she say upon being told, as he was now bound to tell her, that he and Peg had been playing a huge trick? Even if she had not already made up her mind to leave him, this was more than enough to make her.

Curiously enough—or not curiously, when one remembers the contradictions of human nature—he couldn't help being glad that she was putting herself to so much trouble for his sake. It proved to him, quite conclusively, that she was jealous, and that, more than anything else, made him certain that she still loved him.

Then he tried to lift one of the trunks. He could just move it, and that was all.

Mrs. Billy had lost.

XX

VIOLA left her bedroom, and went quickly down-stairs. She stopped for a moment in the hall, and swiftly examined each label and each lock.

She passed straight to her desk, and wrote out her address for the servants. She heard some one moving in the room, and spoke without looking up.

"I don't think there is time for you to get anything to eat, now. The brougham is at the door. I think we had better go before they come down."

"I am already down, Viola," said Hay. "I hope in time."

Viola wheeled round. "In time for what, pray?" she asked, her head in the air.

Hay spoke very gently. "In time to persuade you not to take this journey."

"I fear," replied his wife, bending again over the desk, "that even your

remarkable powers of persuasion will fail in this case. The carriage is at the door."

Hay rang the bell. "We will send the carriage away, I think."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I am anxious for a little talk with you, Viola, if you will spare me a few minutes."

"I can give you two minutes," she said, coldly.

"I regret that two minutes will be hardly enough." He turned to Stanner. "Mrs. Hay will not require the brougham, after all."

Stanner looked a hundred questions, bowed hurriedly and left the room.

Viola was furious. She flung down her pen, and let the lid of the desk fall with a bang.

"How dare you countermand my orders to the servants?"

"I beg your pardon," replied Hay, "but there seemed no other way, for the moment, in which to persuade you to give me a few more minutes than two."

Viola crossed the room to ring the bell, but Hay intercepted her with a quiet, quick movement.

"Ring the bell, I insist!" she cried.

Hay stood firm.

"You can catch a later train, if you wish to do so when you have heard what I have to say. It will make us both look a little foolish, if you give another order now."

Mrs. Hay's hand fell to her side. "Then perhaps you will be good enough to tell Stanner to order the brougham for the ten-thirty."

She sat on the settee, and tapped the floor angrily with her foot. The light from a carefully shaded electric lamp fell upon her face. Hay thought that he had never seen her looking more beautiful—or less likely to waver from her intention.

"I will order the carriage at any time you choose when you and I have finished our little talk," he said.

"Many thanks," she replied, deliberately turning her back upon him.

Hay went a little nearer. His manner was studiously quiet and self-con-

trolled. He didn't allow a single tremor to show itself in his voice, or a sign of his extremely mixed feelings to appear on his face.

"Viola," he asked, "will you please tell me where you intend going to-night?"

"Certainly. To the Coburg Hotel."

"May I ask what your object is in leaving the bungalow?"

"As you will so soon know, I really don't see any reason why I shouldn't gratify your curiosity."

"Thank you."

"I am leaving you," she said, a little wildly.

"So I imagined."

"I am going to institute proceedings for a divorce."

"Ah?"

"Mrs. Hay *versus* Mr. Hay and Mrs. Hutton."

"I see."

Viola was compelled to look at her husband. His total lack of astonishment or annoyance irritated her beyond words. "It doesn't seem to cause you the least surprise," she said.

"Well, yes, it does," replied Hay. "I know you to be a clever woman, and this shows such a wilful lack of knowledge of the law, on your part."

"What do you mean by a knowledge of the law? I don't see that the law has got anything to do with it."

"To a certain extent, it has," said Hay, politely. "The law renders it impossible for you to be divorced from me."

"What!" cried Viola. "After the way you have been behaving?"

"Certainly."

"Day after day, alone, constantly kissing?"

"But never alone."

"Never alone?"

"Never alone. You were always within sight, and generally within hearing."

"How do you know?"

"We saw you."

"You knew that I was following you about?"

"Always; otherwise, we shouldn't have pretended to make love."

"Pretended to make love!" echoed Viola, scornfully.

Hay went nearer, and allowed a little feeling to creep into his voice. "We pretended, in the hope that you and Hutton might realize what kind of thing you had made us—Mrs. Billy and I—suffer."

Viola left her chair, and stood facing her husband. "To dream that I could believe such a fairy-tale!" she cried. "Pretended to make love! . . . Why, in this very room . . ."

"If you had watched more carefully in this very room you would have seen how truly we were pretending." And then his self-control broke down. He put out his hand appealingly, and his voice shook with tenderness. "Vi, in your heart you know that there is only one woman on God's earth for me!"

Viola waved his hand away. "And that woman is Mrs. William Hutton."

"And that woman is my wife."

Viola burst into a hysterical peal of laughter.

"Good heavens! you must think me an imbecile! After all I've gone through, after all I've seen and heard, to ask me to believe that you were pretending! Are we children, that we play these games?"

"It seemed to me," said Hay, "that a far more dangerous game than pretending was on foot. It seemed to me that if you and Hutton—"

"That old story!" cried Viola. "Isn't it rather a mean thing to try and hide behind that?"

"Old story? Four days ago."

"And in those four days, what have you done?" Viola felt that she was losing ground. She felt that all the time she had been laboring under a misapprehension, that all her suffering, all her sleepless nights, all her jangles with Billy, had been brought about by herself. None of this would have occurred if she had not done with Billy very much the same thing she was accusing her husband of doing with Peg. She wouldn't haul her flag down without an effort. So she lost her temper in the usual womanly manner in such circumstances.

"The indelicacy of it all," she continued. "Before my very eyes! Thrusting your double life upon me! Forcing your wife to notice the violence of your love for your mistress!"

The blood flooded Hay's face.

"That's enough," he said. "I will order your carriage for the ten-thirty."

Before Viola could muster up courage and sink her pride sufficiently to say how sorry she was to have said such a horrible thing—a thing she didn't mean, and never for a moment believed, Hay had gone to the window, and Mrs. Billy was on the veranda.

"I can't find my old man," whispered Peg. "What luck have you had?"

Hay raised his voice loudly enough for Viola to hear. It was shaking with temper.

"I regret to tell you, Mrs. Billy, that your kind help has been of no avail. The Hay-Hutton episode will reach its termination in the divorce-court."

He went out into the darkness. The two women were face to face.

XXI

"ARCHIE seems a trifle perturbed," said Peg. "For the first time in his life his tie was crooked. I wonder if you can tell me what he meant?"

"Precisely what he said," replied Viola, coldly.

Peg sat down, and held a bunch of roses to her nose. "Dear me! May one know more? Don't tell me that Archie is going to divorce you!"

"I'm afraid you don't quite understand the position of affairs," said Viola.

"They seem very exciting. I should so like to know. I promise not to tell any one."

Viola began putting on her gloves, paying great attention to the exact fit of each finger. "You will know quite soon enough. You are intimately connected with the case."

"Connected with a divorce case!" cried Peg, with a gurgle of delight. "Oh, Viola, consider the opportunity

for Paquin. I must go up to London and be photographed. All the illustrated papers will want my picture. People will think I am in the smart set. I shall become a notoriety. But *do* tell me where I come in."

"You will occupy the unenviable position of co-respondent," said Viola, contemptuously.

Peg broke into ripples of laughter. "How delicious! How excruciating!"

Viola surveyed her icily. "You're easily amused," she said.

"*Easily* amused! My dear Viola, haven't you any idea how funny you are?"

Viola drew herself up, with an air of almost matronly dignity. "I am thankful to say that a sense of decency still remains to me," she said.

Peg wiped her eyes, and watched Viola with intense amusement. "Although," she asked, sweetly, "you had such a—well, hardly tepid affair with my Billy?"

The third finger of her left hand occupied Viola's whole attention. "It is not in my nature to joke at the annihilation of two houses," she remarked, going off at a tangent.

"Oh," said Peg. "I'm not laughing at that, believe me."

"Indeed? If I had forgotten myself as you have I can hardly imagine giving way to such a disgusting exhibition of levity."

"My dear Viola, do forgive me, but it's the most humorous suggestion I have ever heard. I—a co-respondent! It's unique! It's whimsical!"

"I trust you may find it so," said Viola, primly. "It is positively odious to me to see a woman of your age treating her sins as though they were burrs stuck to her dress."

"My sins? Oh, dear, it's not so much my sins that amuse me, as your absolute ignorance of our English divorce laws."

"I fail to understand you."

"Do tell me how you hope to get a divorce from Archie."

"There will be no difficulty after what I have seen and heard."

"And do you really think that your bare word will be sufficient?"

"There's your husband's testimony, as well."

"Billy's testimony?" Peg exploded again. "Billy? Is Billy going to help you? Have you persuaded him to give me up?"

Viola rose. Her attitude and expression were those of a deeply injured woman, driven to extremities. "I have got his promise to give evidence against you—you perfectly disgraceful woman. How *can* you sit there laughing in that shameless, callous way when you well know that you have ruined two homes and spoiled the life of a man like Archie for the mere gratification of an overweening vanity? It—it paralyzes me, and yet I can hardly contain myself! To think that I—I should have been subjected to these indignities by you!"

"Yes, I see your point," said Peg, quietly. "You never read your paper, do you?"

"No, thank heaven!"

"I quite agree with you; but if you did, you would see that although you may spend twelve thousand pounds in twelve days, engage twelve eminent K.C.'s, and wear twelve costumes to dazzle the eyes of twelve little men in a box, the judge will say to you, 'Non-sense, my dear Mrs. Archibald Hay; you've come to me with a mare's nest. You haven't a tittle of evidence! Go home and study the law.'"

Viola went close to Mrs. Billy's chair, and spoke with barely suppressed rage.

"Do you suppose that I am thinking merely of the result, Margaret Hutton? I have one desire only—to see you disgraced. A woman who is taken through the divorce-court never loses the stain, even though a thousand judges and jurymen can't agree. I will ruin you, whatever it costs me."

Peg grew very serious. There was something so decisive, so bitter in Viola's tone that she was unable to do anything but realize that the situation she had worked so hard to render

pleasant was far worse now than it had ever been.

"In your present mood," she replied, "I believe you would, and I am rather ashamed of my laughter. I thought I knew you, after all these years. It is quite time, I see, that I tried to make you see things as they are, and not as you imagine them to be. To start with, Billy will never go with you to London." Viola smiled. "At the moment, he is like nothing so much as a St. Bernard dog with his tail caught in the door. I have only to whistle, and the dear old thing will come leaping to heel. You can't have found him so strong-minded as to risk a cross-examination on this affair?"

Viola made an uneasy movement, and shifted her position.

"As to evidence," continued Peg, "which would justify counsel in letting you take the case into a court, how can you possess evidence of a thing that hasn't happened?"

"Hasn't happened?"

"Hasn't happened. Archie has kissed me only once."

"In this very room, I saw——"

"You saw him kiss me once, two inches away from my ear."

"I wonder how you will convince a jury of that?" asked Viola, with a sneer.

"A jury can generally be convinced in England," said Peg.

"Well, you will have an opportunity soon of putting their credulity to the test."

Peg crossed the room, and put her hand on Mrs. Hay's shoulder. "I hope not, Viola, for your sake. You and I have known each other for a long time, haven't we? All those years at school, and ever since, we've been very close friends. I see now how it is my fault that this danger threatens us both."

"There!" cried Viola, "you own it."

"My fault in allowing Billy to practise his usual methods with you."

"Usual methods? What do you mean?"

"We have been married six years. You constitute his sixth flirtation."

"I? Billy told me I was the only woman he had ever really loved."

"For the seventh time," said Peg, "he is capable of saying that as often as most men take tabloids. Billy cares for only one woman, my dear Viola; but Billy is a born flirt. It is the salt of life to him. Poor old Billy! And now that he finds a bunch of gray hair at his temples, he longs to prove to his own satisfaction that he is still capable of attracting. To make a beautiful woman believe that he loves her is, to Billy, as exciting as winning the Derby."

Viola gave an exclamation of disbelief.

"Then, Viola, my dear, I know that flirting is the breath of your nostrils, too. You wanted to see if you couldn't, as usual, lay Billy low. Well, knowing this, and knowing you both, I saw no harm in allowing the affair which I knew would work out quite quickly and quite harmlessly, to go on; but I had not reckoned with Archie. He is quite another kind of temperament. For that reason, I was wrong not to pull Billy up. Archie has suffered intolerably. I feel grieved for him and ashamed of myself, for I could so easily have saved him from suffering by speaking a word to Billy at the outset. Archie has only one idea in his head—you. His whole life is you. You are his only thought, his only care, his only love."

"I was," said Viola, tearfully, "until you came and stole him away."

"My dear," said Peg, gently, "he doesn't care two straws for me."

"What have you been doing, then?"

"We've been playing a little comedy; we've been acting the parts that you and Billy were playing so well, just to show you in what kind of light you both appeared to us."

"That's the excuse Archie made. I don't believe it."

"My dear Vi," said Peg, "don't let us, whatever we do, turn our little comedy into a melodrama. It is this that I have tried to avoid all through. On my honor, I am telling the truth."

Viola wavered. She struggled to maintain her anger, but it had died.

"I am to believe," she asked, in a subdued voice, "that you and Archie have not been flirting, after all?"

"My dear," said Peg, with a little laugh, "if you only knew how profoundly difficult I found it to persuade Archie even to pretend! Why, I had to coach him in whispers whenever you were present. Even as an amateur actor, he was not consistently good. He could never remember his cues, and all the time he was so afraid of hurting you."

"Was he?" said Viola, softly.

"Yes. When you walked so many miles after us, it was, 'Poor darling, how she hates walking!' When I said, 'Archie, it's going well, she's jealous,' it was, 'Poor darling, isn't it horrible!'"

"Was it?" asked Viola, putting a finger on her cheek to arrest a too active tear.

"Think, my dear Vi, what I had to contend against. And yet, after all my energy, all my endeavors to act for the best, I've done no good."

"How?" cried Viola, frightened.

"You've taken us so seriously that you are leaving Archie forever. I have only helped you to break his heart."

Viola turned suddenly, and threw everything—pride, anger, humiliation, self-disgust—to the winds.

"Break his heart! Oh, Peg, do you think it would break his heart if I went away?"

Archie came into the room. Peg, with her eyes, commanded him to stay, and held out her arms to Viola.

"Oh, Peg, Peg, forgive me! I swear to you by all that's sacred in the world that I flirted with Billy only because I was miserable. Archie never tells me that he loves me now. I want to be *told*, I want to be *told*! I love him much more than I used to do, but he never says the things he used to say; he is always so reserved, and treats me as a wife, an institution. You can't think how I long to hear him say, 'I love you, I love you!'"

Without any prompting, Archie

sprang forward and took his wife out of Peg's arms. "Vi, sweetheart, I love you, I love you!"

"Archie!"

"It has all been my fault; I was afraid to say how much I loved you. I thought it would bore you, or that you would laugh at me. But, oh, my dear, I've no words to tell you how I love you—how much you are to me. Every beat of my heart is for you."

Peg made no secret of crying. She took out her handkerchief, and dabbed her cheeks vigorously. Through her tears there was a kind of laugh, and in her eyes an immense gladness.

"Of course this is too perfectly delightful," she said, "and I should like nothing better than to cry like a baby on both your shoulders for a solid three-quarters of an hour, but I can see Billy's cigar coming up the garden, and it won't do for him to find me wet-eyed. He'll think I'm crying about him, and begin to buck."

"Mrs. Billy," began Archie, holding out his hand.

"Not now, Archie. I'm so happy that if you say anything now I shall be bound to cry my nose red, and how can a woman with a red nose give a curtain lecture to her husband?"

"I see," said Hay, with a gay laugh. "Come, Vi, let's get out into the air; God's in His heaven!"

XXII

"He never tells me that he loves me!" sobbed Viola. "I want to be told! I want to be told!" And in this cry from a woman's heart lies one of the secrets of how to be less unhappy, though married.

Good women are made up of many curious ingredients. Mixed up with their faithfulness and obstinacy, their kind-heartedness and their desire for the moon, their courage in difficulties and their impatience under the criss-cross matters of life, their power of self-sacrifice and their unbridled extravagance, there is always a never-to-be-satisfied desire, however common-

place they may be, for what is romantic. A woman likes to persuade herself that the man she has married looks upon her as the only woman in the world whom he could possibly have married, that he has eyes for no other woman, that she has been elevated by him to a position far above the heads of her sisters. Everything and everybody she meets persuades her to a contrary belief; her own observation convinces her that it is not so; her own intuition settles the question unalterably. Nevertheless, the desire remains, and the only way it can be partially satisfied is to be told daily, bi-daily, if possible hourly, by her husband, that he loves her, that he adores her, that she is an angel. He doesn't really convince her that he is speaking the truth, but reiteration comforts. Therefore, if a man knows this, it is not only wise of him, but it is his duty, to tell his wife these things as often as she desires to have them told.

There are cases where a husband can honestly and sincerely say that his wife is the one woman he loves in the world. Granted that he is a well-bred member of society whom his wife can respect and admire, then the marriage is one that has been made in heaven.

There are others where a man can very nearly be honest and sincere when he tells his wife the thing she so much desires to hear. That marriage is also made in heaven.

But there are the Lord knows how many others where a man cannot say with any honesty whatever any of the things which these other men can say, and if they could, they wouldn't. These are the marriages that are of the earth, earthy. They are disastrous, horrible, ignoble and were better ended.

A woman is like an instrument. Play the right notes at the right moment and the result is harmony. Play the wrong ones . . . !

All this applies equally to the man.

After all, there is lots of room for silence in the grave.

XXIII

BILLY's cigar came nearer and nearer, and then gleamed in the doorway.

Peg was sitting in the most comfortable chair, in the most comfortable attitude; her hands were crossed peacefully in her lap; she hummed a little song.

Billy walked slowly into the room with his eyes upon her, and stood in front of her.

"I'm back," he said.

Peg looked up at him with a mild expression of surprise.

"Oh, good evening, Billy. Let me see, you've been in bed, haven't you? I hope you're better?"

"I don't think I shall ever be the same man again," he replied, gloomily.

"Were you as bad as all that?"

There followed a short silence.

"I knew that you and Archie were only play-acting."

Peg smothered a laugh. "Oh, you knew, did you?"

"Of course, I knew. I'm not a fool. Archie is an extremely good chap—one of the best, and all that, but, hang it, hardly the man you'd fancy in that kind of way."

"Oh!"

Billy dropped the ash of his cigarette on the floor, and put his foot on it. "Oh, hang it, no; all the same, it was not a very sporting trick to play. It was horrible while it lasted. I found another white hair this morning!"

Peg hardly dared look at him. "I've always heard," she said, quietly. "that too much bed is bad for the hair."

"Oh, what rot! Er——"

He paused uncomfortably, and ran his fingers up and down the back of a chair.

"Yes?"

"I've made it all right between those two."

Peg sat up. "Oh, you did that, did you?" she asked, interestedly.

"Course I did. I had to speak pretty straight to Archie."

Peg gave way, and laughed and laughed and laughed.

"Oh, well," added Billy, "it's all right now, anyhow. We won't quarrel as to who did it. I wish to goodness you'd stop laughing and humming silly songs like a disinterested bee. Why laugh?"

"It isn't a bit funny," said Peg, almost exhausted, "is it?"

Billy flung away his cigar, and made a stride to Peg's chair. "I say, Peg, I want to tell you something. You won't chip me if I tell you?"

"My dear William! I am not a sculptor."

He hesitated, looking, for once in his life, almost shy.

"Well, look here. I read in some

book or other that at about thirty-five a man begins to lose whatever looks he had and the power of making pretty women interested in him."

"Well?" encouraged Peg.

"Well, d'ye see, I thought I'd try."

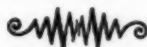
He suddenly went on his knees, and put his arms roughly round his wife.

"Peg, you little wretch, I adore you! I always have and I always shall. Don't you know that, darling old girl?"

Peg tightened her arms, and put her face silently up to his.

"Ha! ha! That's all right, then. Everything's comfortable again, and—and there's an end."

"Yes, old man," said Peg, with a laugh, "and a beginning."



DECEIVED

IT is only the same old story—
I trusted a woman's face;
I gazed on her hair's bright glory,
And her figure's lissome grace.

Her eyes were so near to weeping
As she pled for a man's great trust,
I'd have given my soul to her keeping,
So I yielded—as all men must.

But, fickle as any sailor,
She left me to vain regret;
(I am a ladies' tailor—
And she owes for her habit yet!)

S. DECATUR SMITH, JR.



THE REST CURE

JAGGLES—Did you ever know any one to be benefited by this absent treatment?

WAGGLES—Yes, indeed. Look how poor Henpeck picks up every Summer as soon as he has sent his wife away to the country.

BEETHOVEN'S SONATA APPASSIONATA

By Arthur Stringer

I N distant rooms, above sad wind and rain,
 She, who her grieving heart could utter not,
 Weighed down with wearied love's too-golden chain,
 Lures from low keys this glory tear-enwrought;
 And with bent head I listen, and I know
 (As he once knew, who through her speaks again)
 That gladness, at its greatest, walks with woe,
 That music, at its deepest, dwells with pain!

For luting through Earth's loneliness and gloom,
 A second Orpheus of more frenzied soul,
 He came to us, who groped as from a tomb
 For that free air down which his music stole.
 He, from his more harmonious world of song
 Crept in to us, who dreamed with heavy eyes
 And heard his lyre, and then could only long,
 Half madly, for life's unremembered skies!
 And, like Eurydice, we yearned again
 To tread some lost and more melodious air,
 Where once we too had known that happier strain
 And once our exiled feet were wont to fare!

A gleam of lives more golden but long gone,
 A thin, strange echo of celestial things,
 Came to us, and forgotten glories shone
 From out the fires of Earth's rememberings.
 Then, then we knew our Dusk once had its Dawn,
 And all those dreams that tease our mortal breast,
 All, all those ways we would, yet could not, reach,
 All, all our vain desires, our old unrest,
 In Song he woke, that long had slept in speech!
 For he had heard that low Uranian strain
 That must divinely madden him who hears;
 And they on high beheld the god-like pain
 That mocked his soul, and closed his mortal ears!

So thou, sad angel exile, on low keys,
 Through wind and rain, in quiet rooms afar,
 Seeking this immemorial ache to ease
 And flinging forth against each mortal bar
 Once more his immemorial harmonies,
 With hands that are as wings, from star to star
 Now bearest me away, past earthly seas
 To some old Home, where God and Music are!

EDWARD VII., AMBASSADOR

By Sir Gilbert Parker, M.P.

THE secret of King Edward's influence upon foreign affairs lies in the fact that he is powerful, influential, and mediatory, without being directly responsible. When a Government acts, every move or word has a force beyond the significance of the moment, it may be; even its preliminary motions toward negotiation or business become weighted with public and press comment, while the Government it approaches has no greater freedom for manœuvre, and feels that each step may be one impossible to retrace, each word capable of misinterpretation or misuse.

King Edward's recent adventures in the domain of diplomacy have had the advantage of being unofficial in an administrative sense, yet of being a move by the head of the people toward *rapport* with another people—the contact being vivid and personal. The strength of his position lies in the fact that he does represent, that he does express with extraordinary accuracy the feelings and motives which are emerging, or have emerged, from the public mind. Heads of parties try to create two sets of public opinion, which travel by different paths. The one or the other must be more or less in the wrong, but there are large national questions, not lying within the province of direct legislation, with which Governments or parties cannot deal, which the public cannot focus of themselves, which no citizen, however popular or trusted, can captain. These questions lie within the influence of, and are ready for the practical leadership of one who has no temptation to play the demagogue, who has no fear

of being charged with self-seeking, and who holds in dutiful and high solicitude the welfare and progress of his people.

Undoubtedly, the recent notable and epoch-making agreement between England and France is the direct outcome of King Edward's diplomacy. The visit of President Loubet to England, in response to that of our monarch to France, created a mutual national sympathy which begot confidence in the *bona fides* of two nations, created an atmosphere out of which treaties of settlement could come without international suspicion. Ministers cannot create this sympathy or this atmosphere; it is the breath of life of a people, and the heads of the clans—the rulers of England and France, champions of national honor—made it the breath of peace and understanding. Decades of distrust and jealousy and warped judgment were suddenly swallowed in the flood of good feeling of 1903. English insularity had and has no interpreter in King Edward, and English candor has found in him its most superb and effective exponent. It was easy for M. Delcassé and Lord Lansdowne to throw a pontoon over the stream of Anglo-French difficulties, over which they were able to speak to each other with the good-will and confidence of two nations behind them. The pontoon may yet become a bridge, permanent and admired, a monument to human art rather than to administrative craft.

While this international *rapport* increases, it has not developed suspicion or anger in other nations, for they also have felt the spirit of this new royal

diplomacy in their own countries, and they are well aware that there is nothing sinister or oblique in King Edward's purposes. They are well aware that he aims, not at British advantage over a foreign neighbor in some new international deal, but rather at clearing the ground of present differences, by wiping out old scores through mutual concessions rather than through going one better in a fresh maneuver, so adding to the long account of parry and thrust.

King Edward is not slim, and his policy has no slimness. Germany and Italy, the Emperor and King Victor, see that the machinery of negotiation and administration in Europe will run more smoothly, if England and France, who have common, if not equal, responsibilities in Egypt, in the New Hebrides, in China, and elsewhere, compromise in details while making the most of their separate national policies. Hitherto, the adjustment of policies has been made difficult by the jealous and bitter conflict of details, and smooth words have only covered stubborn subterranean opposition.

Good understanding between England and France is a guarantee of the peace of Europe; for the attitude of France with Russia and Germany is such that the friendly influence of England and France in the relations of England with Russia, or of France with Germany, must of necessity have great weight in any critical or troublesome period. It is significant that Russia does not resent the Anglo-French *rapprochement*. It bodes no ill to Russia, seeing that her hands are full with Japan; and it is to her advantage that her ally should be working harmoniously with her rival in Asia, knowing as she does that England, never the aggressor against her, will be little tempted to become one at a time when she is binding in diplomatic friendship her own trusted ally. This significant situation has sprung from the act of the King of England, taken on his own initiative, and to him must be the credit of putting the

sponge in the hands of old combatants for wiping the slate clean.

From this centre of his first diplomacy has come closer and friendlier relations with Italy, and Portugal, and Austria, with whom we have no differences. Germany, with whom our differences are mostly industrial, realizes that this friendship with France is a guarantee of peace, and peace to develop her Colonial Empire, which is likely to become a grave anxiety to her, as her late troubles with Africa bear witness, is a thing she greatly desires. It was genius on the part of the King to aim at the Anglo-French *rapprochement*; it will be national stupidity if the promise of wide beneficent consequences is not fulfilled. If our press will continue to pursue a dignified and conciliatory course, the people may be trusted to do the same, and a high example will have been followed to good purpose.

Thus, in the hands of a ruler in a limited monarchy lie opportunities for statesmanship which are never given to rulers more absolute. Every act of the absolute ruler, or of one who, like the German Emperor, is head of the army, and can control the powers or deeds of the state, becomes a semi-official act practically committing the state; if not the people, to the policy involved in that act. The sovereign of England may hold views, and express them, contrary to the opinion or will of the people, and still not disturb at all the working of the constitution, or affect injuriously the process of legislation. In opposition to his ministers he is powerless, though he may impede the machinery, and may vex the administration; but his power when moving with his ministers, and according to the temper of his people, is very great. He can assist the development of wise public opinion, he can in certain spheres lead it, as the Prince Consort—though not an English sovereign—did in the matter of scientific education and industrial progress; he can deftly make concrete what hitherto has been fluid in public thought and policy, he can think with the citizen

and, like a true artist, which in many respects King Edward is, he can give the public one voice.

Let us briefly inquire into those qualities which make the King successful as a diplomatist, which give him his personal equipment. It is significant that our present sovereign has made no tactical mistakes, has, both as Prince of Wales and King, turned the flank of more than one false movement, and has, by his intelligence and skill, won the admiration of intellectual men. He has been called shrewd, but I prefer to think of him as a man of temperament and imagination, with an instinct as keen as that of a dramatist, or painter, and with the impulses of the instinct rationalized by wide and high experience, and by the best of knowledge—that directly gained *viva voce* from the ablest men of the world. In such associations, in this sort of tuition, he has had the heart of the thing laid bare, the essentials concisely presented for him to apply at once in the discharge of his public duties. I believe that the King is naturally one of the most impulsive men in his empire, but his intellectual qualities, and his capacity for comparison, historical and immediate, his curious ability in feeling what "the other man is thinking," have steadied to powerful use that temperament which, left to flourish unhampered by the convention of duty, necessity, and high responsibility, might have been called genius. In truth, the King has genius of a kind, if he is not to be called a genius, happily for himself. All that rare faculty for saying and doing the right thing, for remembering faces and incidents, and people and places—it is all the equipment of the man of temperament, it is the secret of his popularity. Geniality is no name for it, for he feels when to be genial and he knows when to be "icily regular." He is too powerful in temperament to be merely "genial." With such a temperament as he possesses, there is also dormant in His Majesty a certain irascibility, due to his capacity to feel strongly, to the sharp decision of his mind. He is no

waverer, he does not need to lean on others, and he has a keen impatience with the dull or the inane; but long ago the native irascibility was brought—and kept—under control. Still, the capacity to be wilful—to be impetuous, to be impulsive—lies at the very root of his strength. It all belongs to his influence upon men, quite apart from the power in the state which he represents. Men who know the things that count in intellectual equipment have never underrated the King's knowledge; and his capacity for seeing all sides of a question, though he is known to take one side very strongly, and that not from natural predilection but according to his own judgment, right or wrong.

The King speaks better than most men in his kingdom, though he is tied and bound by formality, and is obliged to limit his remarks to subjects uncontroversial—at any rate, to the non-controversial aspect of them. His speaking is always effective. He has a compelling voice, which easily commands, and would command were he the poorest man in his kingdom. For clearness and controlling power there is no voice in the two Houses of Parliament to equal it, save one. The matter of his speeches—speeches which cannot have been prepared for him, practically impromptu speeches, have an aptness, a turn of phrase, a penetration, due to a mind in tune, and in high tune, with the life around him. He is by nature intensely human, his heart is large, and his sympathies are alive in extreme degree; but here, again, in all that affects his public life, it does no more than give an air of actuality to all that he says and all that he does. He strikes the looker-on as being in earnest, as feeling first instinctively and thinking afterward, which, after all, is the only source of logical or sound intellectual power. This difference may be noted between his utterances and those of the Prince Consort, whose mind was highly philosophical and whose sympathies were wide, and yet who, noble and gifted character as he was, does not in his speeches con-

vey the same sense of direct or spontaneous feeling as that shown by his son Edward.

The King has a marked intellectual accessibility, which is essential in a modern constitutional ruler. There is generally a tendency toward rigidity and even reaction in the mental attitude of royalties, and those placed in positions beyond which there is no higher summit: but in him is neither rigidity nor reaction. The whole practice of ceremony and convention, the great distance from the fighting arena, the parade-ground display, as it were, all serve to make the mind inelastic, to throw it back upon tradition and caution, on the rubric of precedent, which makes for ease but also makes for stagnation. King Edward's interests have, however, brought him into intimate touch with all sides of life, and his views are singularly tolerant and catholic. The movement of his mind is democratic, and his respect for custom and tradition is largely based upon a sense of the picturesque and an unusual sense of order—a taste for the historical sequence of things. To him, history is not so much a matter of symbols and lessons, which can be applied to point the immediate moral and to adorn the present tale, as it is an orderly procession of events, set forth in proper proportion and having significance to-day more as memorials than as guides, more as drama than as the spring of philosophy and preaching.

It has been said by some critical observer of affairs in this country that Mr. Gladstone knew mankind, but that Disraeli knew men; and the quick perception of the King, his deft manipulation of opportunity, his quickness in catching the approaching footfall of events are all evidences of this knowledge of men. He occupies himself less with mankind, is less concerned with human philosophy in its universal activities and its underlying laws, than with the immediate deeds and motives of men and peoples. Within this sphere he is easily the most facile of all public men of contemporary

history. In the words of the transatlantic phrase, "he keeps his ear to the ground;" but he does more, for he catches the note of progress, the national inflection of hope or purpose, the indefinite but pervasive tendency, and he acts upon it promptly. This was the source of the *entente cordiale*. This faculty of stepping forward at the head of the movement of public thought is what makes him so valuable as an international mediator and the negotiator of "invisible securities," if I may coin the phrase. He starts, too, with prejudice in his favor; he is in himself *persona grata* at all courts and in all countries. The fact that he has no legislative power, that his ministers may not represent his own opinions, that his Parliament may move in a direction contrary to his own convictions, that his diplomatic actions and words are not binding, naturally gives his influence wide scope. He negotiates with peoples, not with Governments; therefore, his achievements are in the highest and truest sense national, are as much a result of popular approval as the election of President Roosevelt is the direct pronouncement of the will of the masses. He hands over to the nation the results of his ambassador and negotiations, but he gets a large commission on his enterprise in the increase of prestige and the growing confidence of the country which he governs. He is a man of business in the best sense, and he long ago recognized that he ruled a nation of men who have more respect for businesslike qualities than for attributes of personal charm. To carry, as he does, a really acute imagination safely concealed beneath a smooth business capacity and an outer convention of unruffled dignity is quite worthy of a quarter century's reputation, but it does not belong to the general estimate of that reputation. His activity equals that of the German Emperor, but it is an activity projected from a battery of different calibre and inspired by different force, and it is less hampered by administrative responsibility. At once "the champion of our high lineage," the recorder of

ancient rights, and a democrat in his sympathies with modern movement and the "inevitable trend," he poses neither as patrician, patriarch nor patriot. He walks with quiet footsteps into the good-will of the foreign chancelleries of public opinion, and brings home something to the national treasury.

The Transvaal, Ireland, France have been the most conspicuous and most difficult objects of his diplomatic purpose, and the results are equally conspicuous. Peace with honor can be more fitly applied to all his endeavors than to those of any minister of the past generation. Peace came sooner in the Transvaal because of him; it is not unlikely that it will last because of him. In Ireland there is less personal hostility to Englishmen, less misunderstanding of England, because of him, and if to win the hearts of Connemara is not to turn Irish Nationalists from their political purpose, it goes some distance in stripping political warfare of its acerbity and harshness. The work of diplomacy well begun in Ireland—and it is diplomacy, so alien is the south of Ireland to English rule—may well bring still more useful results, may, indeed, make Irishmen and Ireland and Irish questions better understood by Englishmen, whose judgments have been narrowed by too much dwelling on the challenge to union, thrown down in the "Eighties." If Ireland is not free from traditional wrath, the long influence of tribal vendetta, and the red legends of history, England is not free from blindness of heart, vain-glory, and even hypocrisy; but the King of England has none of these things, is free from them all, was free from them all in darker, sadder days than these.

His Majesty, like Queen Victoria, has a wide knowledge of European affairs; he has got that knowledge in experience—the only school which can effectively teach. His familiarity with the language, the domestic customs and the national idiosyncrasies of every great country of the world, and his accurate estimate of the difficulties that perplex foreign sovereigns and

their Governments, together with a greater freedom to come and go, and the habit of coming and going greater than his royal emulators on other thrones possess, give him extraordinary advantage in the rivalries of *rapprochements* of nations. The friend of peace, with a rare sense of what is fitting and what is in national good taste, with the keenest anxiety to spare the sensibilities of all, by a diplomatic intervention at home he prevents or allays many a bad impression abroad. His diplomacy is not confined to visits to other countries; it is a daily habit at home, and more than one actor-manager could tell of a suggestion from Marlborough House, and, in latter days, from Buckingham Palace, which postponed the presentation of a play or a song or a monologue internationally inopportune. This is the kind of thing which a Government never could do, which the King himself as king has no power to achieve, but which, as the head of the people, he can accomplish by a request as imperative in its effect as a command, by an intervention which none of his subjects resents. This sort of thing, this obedience to the will of the head of the clan, is not possible in an absolute monarchy or in a republic. Because no law, no real power of statute or the sword, no penalty, lies behind the unwritten command of the King, it has the more genuine obedience. In a way it is patriarchal, in a way it is the will of the people voluntarily giving itself up to guidance and control by the head of the family; but yielding to the guidance in the first place because it sees behind it common sense, a delicate and acceptable personal legislation and a quiet diplomacy. The closeness of touch between the English monarchy and the people, its dignity and its representative character, give it a national character only properly understood by foreigners themselves. Under King Edward's rule it is likely to become still more representative, in touch as he is with every phase of national and international life. Its influence will, no doubt, grow wider and wider

as his frank diplomacy increases in power at home and abroad. While other European nations less fortunately developed, politically and constitutionally, labor under the burdens of their disabilities, England is able to strengthen the hands of its Sover-

eign in one of the high duties of his place—a diplomacy which seeks no national benefit at another nation's expense, but a better understanding between nations which will make for a common benefit and for the peace of the world.



TYPES

AURELIA, with the meek blue eyes,
And pretty curls of pale-gold hair,
Why is it that your memory lies
Upon my spirit like a prayer?
Modest you seemed as cloistered nun
Or violet, shrinking from the sun—
You were in truth, a flirt, the worst
That e'er the peace of mankind cursed.

Jacinta, rose-brown, black-haired, tall,
With flashing glance and upheld head,
Why did you make me think of all
The wicked ones of whom I've read—
Wild Cleopatra, Helen bold
Of Troy, and others of like mold?
And yet, I know, who knew you best,
A child's pure heart throbbed in your breast!

MADELINE BRIDGES.



AN AUTHORITY

JOSH MEDDERS (*didactically*)—When it comes to classic music—
ABNER APPLIEDRY (*skeptically*)—Hoh! What do you know about classic music?

JOSH MEDDERS—I know *all* about it, by gosh! Wasn't I run over and durned near killed by a circus band-wagon, over to Allegash, last Summer?



PROPRIETOR—What kind of a room do you want?
GUEST—High, and low.

RECLAMATION WORK

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF CONSTANTINE DIX

By Barry Pain

AT one time the wives and families of men who were serving their sentences in prison frequently suffered great privation. In sheer desperation they would often be themselves driven to dishonest courses to procure the bare means of existence, and in this way the punishment of crime was in reality the cause of its multiplication. To a lesser extent this evil still prevails, though I should be doing less than justice did I not mention the splendid efforts of several organizations, and notably of the Church Army, to deal with it. I sometimes did what I could in this direction myself.

When Alfred Gimbrell, a criminal of feeble type and low intelligence, got what he termed a tray of moons, he had a message conveyed to me that he would take it very kind if I would keep an eye on the missus and the kids. He had a large family, and was an affectionate husband and father. I provided them with a small sum of money for their immediate necessities, and set about finding work for the woman. In this I had no difficulty. It was in the height of the London season, and many firms were giving temporary employment to extra hands. Moreover, Mrs. Gimbrell was a really clever woman with her needle. I told the plain facts of the case to Messrs. Pawling & Ramsworthy, of Oxford street, and they agreed to take her on if I would guarantee the value of the materials entrusted to her. To this I at once consented; I have done the same thing in several cases, and I have never

once lost a penny by it. Five of the children were at school, the eldest girl helped her mother, and the eldest boy sold newspapers. From time to time, when I was in the neighborhood, I looked in to see how they were getting on. To my mind, they seemed to be doing better without Alfred than with him.

Mrs. Gimbrell was touchingly grateful.

"If ever Alf goes crooked again," she said, "after all you've done, Mr. Dix, he ought to be took out and shot, though it's his own wife that says it."

"Ah, Mrs. Gimbrell," I said, "why did you not use your influence to check him before he got into this trouble? Time after time, you must have known that the money he brought you was not made honestly."

"Well, what was I to do? After all, it's for 'im to look after me; it's not for me to look after 'im. It's not for a married woman to set and slave while the man spends the money. He ain't bad, many ways. He don't drink—leastways, not like some. And fond of 'is children? Oh, not 'arf! Why, 'e'd cut 'is 'and off at the root for 'em. But then it seems like as if he couldn't work. He's one of them that gets soon tired—that's where it is, and the money 'ad got to come from somewhere."

"And now you see where it leads to."

"Yes, we'll 'ave a change now. That I'm determined on. If you could only speak to 'im! He's out Saturday morning, and then it's just the few weeks before we all goes down to the

hop-picking. That always suits 'im—looks a better man every time when 'e comes back. If 'e'd keep straight for them few weeks, there might be a chance."

"I will do what I can. On Sunday afternoon I shall be giving a short address in Hyde Park. Bring him to hear me, and I will see that what I say is specially suited to his case. Yes, I know that it's a long way, but the walk will do you both good. And when the address is over I will have a few words with him privately."

She thanked me again, and I left.

I had been on the verge of telling her to send him up to my house in Lanyon street, Bloomsbury, on Saturday night. But I remembered that Saturday would be the first of August, and I had already arranged for my evening on the first of August.

I proceed with some regret to tell what my arrangements were. I know very well that if these memoirs are ever published, I shall be then far beyond the reach of men's contempt. But I seem already to feel the sting of that word, hypocrite, though it has never at this moment of writing been applied to me. The finest temperance sermon I ever heard was preached by a clergyman who was, as was discovered subsequently, himself a dipsomaniac. I knew the man, and he was no hypocrite. I am as convinced of my ability to reclaim others as of the utter hopelessness of any attempt to reclaim myself. I am a good preacher, but I am a very good thief. Theft happens to be the thing that I do best. I have studied it, and I am fond of it. It gives me a great satisfaction to note the blunders that lead less intelligent criminals to their destruction and the way in which I avoid those blunders. Again, though I have a house at a fairly high rental in Bloomsbury and a smaller house at Brighton, and paid close on five hundred pounds for my motor-car, and live very comfortably, a certain portion of my income is set aside for my work among the criminals and the suffering of the East End of London.

On the first of July—one month before—I happened to be in the bank in the afternoon, and, after finishing my business, I was chatting about the political situation with the cashier, to whom I am well known. I am well known as a philanthropist to quite a number of respectable people. The manager of Messrs. Pawling & Ramsworthy always has a tolerant smile for me, when I tell him of any of my cases, and will help me, if he can do so without risk to himself. I am sure the last time that Ikey got into trouble Inspector Measor was almost apologetic about it, though at the same time he told me that he was afraid I should find Ikey a hopeless case. I am known as a thief to myself alone.

As the cashier was talking, a little old woman stepped up to the counter, and I stood aside for her. She was dressed very neatly in a bygone fashion, and gave me the idea of a particular and prim person. As soon as the cashier saw her, he produced a canvas bag, and, as she handed in her cheque, pushed the bag across to her.

"Thank you, sir. I wish you good afternoon," she said. She put the money in a locked leather bag she was carrying, and went out. I saw the cheque upside down for the fraction of a second, as the cashier took it to his desk—out of sight—to obliterate the signature. It was a cheque for fifty pounds, payable to order, but the word "bearer" had been substituted and initialed. It was signed Hannah Gosforth in a small and particularly neat handwriting.

"You had it all ready for her," I said. "How did you know what she wanted?"

"It's the same on the first of every month—or the second, if the first happens to be a Sunday. She has banked here for the last thirty years, though she lives at Surbiton; and, unless she's ill or away on a holiday, she always comes herself for it. Never counts it, either; says that if she thought I were dishonest or couldn't count, she'd bank somewhere else. Queer customer."

There is a type of woman that always

gets an order cheque-book for safety, and always alters "order" to "bearer" for convenience. She carries fifty pounds in gold through a crowded thoroughfare in a silly hand-bag at a time when a man of observation might be expecting her, and thinks herself secure because the bag has a penny-farthing lock on it. I know that type. I know the kind of cash-box which it uses and trusts. I know its reading-lamp, and its lavender sachets, and its bright keys, and its religious observances. There was a time, back in my boyhood, when I knew some of its charm; and I know now all its futility.

Fifty pounds is not a large sum, perhaps, to a rich man. But I felt that it would be worth my while to take it, especially as the trouble attending it promised to be very slight. I could not go to Surbiton that day, as I had promised to attend a meeting in Clerkenwell in the evening; besides, I should have an equally good opportunity in a month's time. I was anxious to make my visit on the first of the month, because it struck me that a woman who always drew fifty on the first, would be extremely likely to pay the house-books of the previous month on the second, and her domestic servants on the third.

The first of August was a Saturday, and therefore the second was a Sunday—a day on which I felt assured that Miss Hannah Gosforth would neither make nor receive payments. Why, then, did I not postpone my visit to the Sunday? Simply because I happen to share Miss Gosforth's views as to the observance of Sunday. I give up the whole of Sunday to what I think to be the higher branch of my work, and frequently I have given as many as six addresses in the one day. I should not dream of making money on Sunday. And I have a conviction—the infidel will call it stupid fatalism—that if I ever break my rule the last calamity will follow.

So on Saturday afternoon I put a packet of sandwiches in one side-pocket of the jacket of a blue serge suit and a flask of cold, weak tea, flavored with

lemon, in the other side-pocket. I have no objection to drinking intoxicating liquors when I wish to become intoxicated, as from time to time occurs. But for ordinary drinking I have found cold tea to be the most useful. It should be very weak—strong tea affects the nerves, and my nerves are important—and the flavor of lemon blends pleasantly. In the breast-pocket of the same jacket, I carried a letter to Miss Hannah Gosforth. Inside was the circular of a new and pushing boot-making company which had been left in my own letter-box that morning. On the envelope was a particularly illegible address, written by myself. I have no false modesty about it. In these memoirs I state facts only, and you can draw your own conclusions. It is a fact that I am a master in the art of writing partially illegible addresses. You could just make out the name of Miss Gosforth, and you could decipher the word "street." The word Surbiton was written in a larger hand, and was clear enough for anybody. But the number and name of the street were quite illegible. With this I had very little doubt that I should be able to discover Miss Gosforth's place of residence.

When I arrived at Surbiton I went into the first shop of any importance that I came across, and showed the letter.

"A friend," I said, "asked me to deliver this while I was in Surbiton, and I can't make head or tail of the address. It's for a Miss Gosforth. I wonder if you could help me?"

The man to whom I was speaking had approached with the usual obsequious smile. He now looked distinctly sulky.

"No," he said, "I can't help you. Miss Gosforth don't deal here."

It was clear to me that Miss Gosforth had at one time dealt there and had subsequently transferred her custom; also, that the man knew her address perfectly well and had not the remotest intention of giving it, so I thanked him and went out. I then tried a postman, with the same story.

"Yes," he said, "I know Miss Hannah Gosforth well enough, but that address is wrong. It's not a street, it's a road—Marley Road. Ivy Cottage, Marley Road, that's where she lives, and it's pretty well the last house."

I gave the man a shilling, and a few minutes later was ringing the bell at Ivy Cottage. I handed my letter to the servant, and went off. I had thus made my observations of the place under circumstances unlikely to cause suspicion.

Ivy Cottage was a small detached house with a scrap of garden between it and the road and a larger garden behind. I had seen through the window the old lady's methodical writing-table. It was of the kind known as an Oxford table, and I had very little doubt that she kept her useless cash-box in one of the bottom drawers of that table, locked it with an equally useless key, and slept with a conviction that she had done all that a mortal woman could do to defend her property, and might leave the rest to Providence. Any of the windows on the ground floor could be opened with ease, but to prevent observation from the road, I decided to take one of the windows at the back.

I wandered away into the country, finished my sandwiches and tea, and made notes for my addresses on the following day. It was a beautifully warm and peaceful evening, with that strange calm in it that I have so often noticed in the country on the eve of Sunday, as though Nature, like man, now prepared for a while to rest.

I was back at Ivy Cottage by half-past ten. By that time, I felt certain that the old lady and her household would be in bed and asleep, and I knew that I could do what I had to do quietly and very quickly.

In the garden behind the house, I found a man standing with his back to me, spreading with some care a sheet of brown paper with treacle.

I do not mean that under the doubtful light of the stars I could detect that the paper was brown or that it was treacle which was being used.

That was a matter of conjecture. But I saw enough to be sure that here was a man on the point of effecting a burglarious entrance into Miss Gosforth's house. The treacle-spread sheet of stiff paper is applied to a pane of the window, and the glass can then generally be broken and removed without noise. The broken pieces adhere to the paper. The man gets his arm through the hole, feels for any electric alarm-wires and cuts them, and then puts back the catch and opens the window. I have used this trick myself, but I seldom employ it now. The treacle must be of just the right consistency, and the whole thing must be managed with great skill, or the trick fails and a noise is made which awakens the people in the house. It is not certain enough for me.

Intentionally, I took a step on the gravel. It was enough. The man turned sharply, saw me, and then dropped his bottle and the paper, and made a bolt for the road. I ran after him.

Twenty yards down the road, I had almost overhauled my man, when he turned sharp around, and his hand went to his side-pocket.

"Stop that, Alfred Gimbrell," I said; "do you want to kill the man who saved your wife and children?"

He had not recognized me, though I had never had any doubt about him. He used the extremely filthy and blasphemous expression which was habitual with him when he wished to indicate great surprise and astonishment, and then pulled out his revolver and handed it to me.

"There yer are," he said. "Put my lights out. I deserve it."

"You are talking foolishly, Gimbrell," I said. "I shall take this weapon because you are not to be trusted with it. But it was not to kill you that I came to Surbiton tonight. It was to save you from the consequences of your own folly and wickedness."

"I suppose, Mr. Dix, it's no good astin' you how you knew I was on this lay."

I answered him with another question: "Where did you buy this revolver?" I had noticed that it was new and had not been used.

He thought it over for a moment. "I see," he said. "And so you followed me on from there. Why, you'd make a 'tec. I never knew you was near me. Oh, blast it! What's the good?"

"Don't swear, Gimbrell. Bad language, as I have told you before, is something worse than useless. Come along quietly with me, and tell me how you came to be doing this when you have only been for a few hours out of prison?"

We walked away from the town, and he talked as we went.

"If you arst me how I knew of it, I had it from a friend, who got it from a pal of his that knows the servant. My friend was to have took half what I got."

"Ah, Gimbrell, that was no true friend."

"And so I told him myself. Two quid I wouldn't have stuck at. But what right had he got to half, with me taking all the risks?"

"No true friend would have tempted you back to your old way of life at all. I tell you, Gimbrell, you'll have to quit it."

"That's what I was wanting to do. But yer see how it was. I come 'ome and finds the missus very 'aughty and teachin' of my own kids to look on me as if I was a leper. I know she had some money, but there wasn't as much as the price of a pot for me. I could go out and see if I couldn't find a job of work, she said. Nice words those are to use to any man! Then I come on my friend, and he got talking. You see, you must have a bit of something in your pocket to be going on with while you're looking for some suitable occupation. This was to have been the last time. And it was a soft thing—fifty golden sovereigns, and all as easy as telling lies. Mind you, I wasn't going to be took again. I'd have outed the copper and myself, too. I wouldn't go till my friend gave me the

money to get this revolver. And that's the kind of man as my missus turns round on and says, 'Oh, cawn't you go and get yerself a job of work?' Just like that! And I assure you, Mr. Dix, that's a woman I've never so much as raised my 'and against. What I want to know is if I'm expected to stand such treatment as that, while——"

"Never mind that. Your wife has worked hard and well to keep the home together while you were in prison. You should try to win back her respect."

"She'd have respected me fast enough if I'd come 'ome to-night with them quids in my pocket."

"There you are mistaken. While you have been away she has learned to look at things very differently."

"So she told me—going on as if I wasn't good enough for her."

His wife had evidently been very tactless. In many ways I felt sorry for the man. I determined to see if I could not break through his miserable conceit and his utter recklessness, and touch his heart. With the utmost fervor and sincerity I threw myself into the work. I spoke to him of his children. I said much which need not be repeated here. And in the end I succeeded. I had the man weeping and penitent, and I had his most solemn promise that he would lead a new life in future. Then I gave him a few shillings to pay his fare back and get himself some supper, and sent him off.

In Gimbrell's flight from the house and my pursuit of him a certain amount of noise must have been made. It would not have surprised me if I had found the house lighted up. But it was all in darkness, and not a sound was to be heard. I went around to the back and found the sheet of brown paper and the bottle that Gimbrell had dropped. I had not intended to use anything of the kind, but as it was there and all prepared, I fitted the sheet to a pane of glass. It worked very well.

I met with no incidents of interest while I was in the house. I was there

for only a few minutes. The cash-box was not in the drawers of the table, but in a little locked cupboard in the sideboard. It was much as I expected. It had a triple lock, and looked very substantial. The bottom of it was a separate piece fastened in with four screws. It was made in Germany, and, if these lines should ever come to the eye of its maker, I hope that he will let me take this opportunity of saying that I am obliged to him. It contained £40 6s. 3d. It was less than I had expected, but I think I made up the difference with a pair of salt-cellars, genuine Queen Anne

and very interesting. I intended these for my own use. I left Gimbrell's revolver behind me. I never carry anything of that kind. The police were very pleased at finding it, but they did not succeed in tracing the purchaser of it.

Gimbrell, who heard of the old lady's loss, was much impressed with the coincidences that the case presented.

"Why," he said, "if I'd only gone a bit later, and you 'adn't been following me, that other bloke and me might 'ave met in the 'ouse. It would 'ave made me angry, but I couldn't 'ave 'elped laughing."



UNDER WHICH KING BENZONIAN?

LOVE lifts on white wings to the gates
Of Paradise and enters in;
Lust has for wings two leaden weights
That sink into the lake of sin.
Lust squats, toad-like, his loathsome cell—
Love seeks the light, on, on, above;
Love is of God, as God is love,
But lust is Lucifer in hell.

JOAQUIN MILLER.



THE WAY IT WAS

"I DON'T, as a general rule, care a tinker's anathema for such things," said the Old Codger, in the midst of his perusal of the village newspaper. "These 'ere commencement exercises have always seemed monotonously alike to me. But this article in the *Weekly Plaindealer* says that at the doin's last Friday night, the graduates sat in a semicircle on the stage, ten young girls dressed in white, each holding a large bunch of carnations and one young man. According to that, I sh'u'd presume I missed a real interesting sight by not being present on that occasion."

AFTER RAVENHOE

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

'T WAS many a yellowing year ago that the King rode down from Ravenhoe.

And we met midway—I mind it yet, God wot, the flanks of my steed were wet!—

He hailed from the rim of a cliff's incline; the sky was red as the King's own wine;

He waved his plume and he drew his rein—there were flecks of foam on his charger's mane.

"Ho, lad! and halt! Come not more nigh!"—Oh, glad was his voice and proud his eye!

"'Tis victory over the Ravenhoses and I wave to the Queen in her garden-close! For if 'twere victory—thus said she—I should stay me here for her first to see; I should stand me here against the sky, should there be no mightier King than I!"

Battle and blood they lay behind. Like a lad he laughed at the silver wind.

Battered his helm and bent his spear, and I heard his horsemen thundering near;

He stood in the stirrup brave and tall, and waved to the green o'er a distant wall;

"Ho, lad! 'Tis a gleam of white I see!" . . . "Sire, white are the boughs of her young plum tree . . ."

"'Tis her silken scarf, and I must not lag!" . . . "Hold, Sire! . . . 'Tis the wind in the tower flag!"

"Nay! 'tis her hand—she awaits me there!" . . . "Sire, blossoms are white as her hand is fair . . ."

Quoth he: "Then I fly where that blossom blows—the whitest one in her garden-close!"

Together we galloped us side by side, I prest to the King, the King toward his bride.

Together we galloped, we galloped apace, till he panted: "Speak, boy! How looked her sweet face?"

The star of my kingdom 'tis, I ween!" . . . "Sire, hers was the smile of a crowned queen."

"Aye, crowned by this warrior's hand of mine!" . . . "Is there no hand, Sire, which can crown save thine?"

His plume he raised to the reddened sky: "Love only is King that is greater than I!"

"Sire, . . . thou hast spoken the word but now. Love is the King that is greater than thou."

Leaped we down at the postern gate—silent the horn. Oh, the King was late!
Sprang to the garden-close . . . Alack! the white boughs, waving,
warned him back.

Stair and terrace and echoing floor—waited in silence each open door;
Strode he the tangled rushes strown. She had waited long who waited
alone . . .

Red as blood was her mullioned pane, white was she as bloom after rain;
Aye, white in state the Queen did lie, and she wore Death's crown right royally.
Thunder of battle and triumph's stir could not trouble the smile of her.

Prone to the earth the King fell blind . . .

The horns of his horsemen smote the wind.

(Battle and glory lay behind . . .)

The trumpets of horsemen clove the air . . .

(Flower of victory perished there . . .)

Low at her feet he smote his brow . . .

"Sire, . . . thou didst speak the word but now . . . Love is the King that
is greater than thou!"



POSITIVE PROOF

"WIGGIN'S wife is a dead-game sport, isn't she?"

"Well, I should say so. He tells me he learned to smoke on his wedding
trip."



NO FAIRY TALE

"WILL you marry me?" he asked.

"No," she replied.

And they lived happily ever afterward.



LITTLE BOY BLUE prepared to blow his horn.

"I don't care anything about the sheep in the meadow or the cows in the
corn," he observed, "but with an eight-thousand dollar machine I simply can-
not afford to run over any more children."

So saying, he turned off the spark.

THE BISHOP'S SON

By Kathryn Jarboe

TO quote Mrs. Lee's own flippant language, she was a red-haired Western widow of twenty-three. She had forsaken the broad prairies and plains of Colorado for the narrow streets of New York because in Colorado she could find no agreeable ways of spending even a fraction of the fortune left her by Peter Lee, late owner of many millions and many mines. Her house in New York asserted rather broadly that she had discovered some ways of disposing of this income. All the rooms were artistically simple, and that, from a financial point of view, is very different from simply artistic. The entire second floor had been thrown into one large apartment. As Mrs. Lee explained, some concession had to be made to Colorado lungs—they needed at least one room in the house where they could expand. The walls and ceilings here, the rugs and draperies, were green—a green neither dull nor dark, and not so faint that it could be mistaken for any other color. To the decorator, Mrs. Lee had said that she herself would furnish the necessary chromatic variation. The artist, his mind absorbed in textile fabrics and commercial pigments, did not understand the personal application of his patroness's remark. Assuming that she referred to tapestries or paintings, he devoted himself to the construction of an artistic background. When he had finished his labors, Mrs. Lee found the room adorable, perfect, exactly as she wanted it, absolutely right. As a background for her own radiant self, it was just as it should have been—perfect.

The windows at the back were of

thick green glass, shading darker and lighter, apparently according to the caprice of the material. Hedging one corner of the room was a tall screen of the same glass, but across the centre of this floated a round, silvery moonfish, a sentient bit of light in a deep, green pool. High palms shaded the front windows, and on every table and cabinet—scattered about even on the floor—were pots of maidenhair and low, flat bowls of violets.

On every table and cabinet, too, were photographs of Mrs. Lee's New York friends, encased in silver frames. For Mr. Lee's legal advisers had received Mr. Lee's widow, with deferential courtesy; the wives of these legal advisers had hastened to greet the owner of Mr. Lee's millions, and, inasmuch as the Colorado mine-owner had demanded legal aid only from men who were on the topmost rung of the ladder, it is needless to say that from the drawing-rooms of these women the rich widow found easy stepping-stones to other houses equally exclusive. Doors opened to the right and to the left, and the owners of the doors bowed before her almost as obsequiously as the flunkies who guarded them. Already her days at home were functions for the smartest of the smart set. Her appearance at the opera was accorded more attention than Caruso's sweetest note. Her goings and her comings, her sayings and her doings, formed the cream of society's small talk.

The Winter—society's Winter—had melted quite away, and Spring—in the South—was calling society's birds of passage, when Mrs. Lee made several

discoveries that interfered with her peace of mind. The first was that she had fallen in love, desperately, completely, over head and heels, like the most ordinary school-girl. In commenting upon this fact to her Colorado confidants, she said that she was awfully glad because she did think that a woman ought to marry once for love. The second discovery was that the man whom she loved, loved her, loved her absolutely and entirely for herself, and did not care in the least for Peter Lee's money. "And it's awfully lucky," she wrote, "that Bertie hasn't sense enough, commercial sense enough, to understand the value of money, because of course Peter's money was married once for itself and I don't feel that it ought to play a prominent part in a second matrimonial alliance." To these confidants she also wrote that Bertie Dumond was an artist, that he was the only son of Bishop Dumond, and, although these facts seem simple enough, her letters to Colorado at that time invariably required extra postage. Since she wrote about nothing except Bertie, it is safe to assume that he had other good points.

But there was a third discovery that was almost coincidental with the others. Bertie's family—the bishop's family—had not received her with open arms, would not receive her with open doors. This caused her to rage internally and to express her rage externally to Bertie. He, of course, tried to persuade her that she was mistaken, that his sisters, Patricia and Angela, received no one, that they went nowhere, that they were absorbed in church work.

"You know that's rubbish," retorted Marian Lee. Bertie had spent an entire evening advancing his fruitless arguments. "They go everywhere and they receive everybody. I see them wherever I go, and I've met them a dozen times and I assure you that—that Patricia cut me openly this afternoon at Mrs. Hartlee's reception."

"But, my dear!" expostulated Bertie.

"No, no! I'll not have you 'my dear' me any more, and I tell you right

now that I'll not marry you. I'll never marry you, never, never in the world."

"But, Marian, can't you be reasonable just for a minute? Patricia——"

"No," interrupted Marian, "I don't want to hear anything more about them. Of course, you think that I'm in a temper and taking advantage of my red hair and all that, but I'm not. I'm merely firm. I've come to a conclusion, and I'll stick to it—as we say in Colorado."

She had been walking the floor with long, swinging strides that would have covered a prairie mile in a fragment of time. Now she sat down dismissing her temper and, apparently, the subject. "Do you know, I'm awfully tired of that moonfish. I think a hundred little goldfish would be prettier. I get tired of things of that sort rather easily."

The man knew that there was a suggestion of prophecy, a covert threat in her words, for Marian's remarks could rarely be accepted at their face value, but he did not stop to consider this one.

"But, Marian, do let me speak. Patricia is horribly near-sighted, and I don't believe that she saw you at all in those dismal Hartlee rooms."

"Near-sighted! Poof!" She blew his suggestion away as lightly as though it had been a bit of thistle-down. "It's easy enough to know when a person doesn't see you. But when her chin goes up and her eyes go down whenever you happen to be in her range of vision, it's safe to say that the movements are not caused by near-sightedness. No. I dare say she's heard that you come here constantly, and I dare say she thinks I'm a red-haired Western adventuress, eager to marry the first apology for a man who'll take me. An adventuress!" She was again measuring off her wrath against the Dumond family in long strides. "My Aunt Susan warned me that I'd be taken for an adventuress if I came on here alone, because I am red-haired and rich and all that. But ooooff! Fancy even considering the question of marrying a man whose sisters were

fools enough to call one an adventurer!"

"But they haven't called you an adventuress. You've only just now manufactured that idea."

"Ah, but I haven't," cried Marian. She was standing in front of his chair now, her eyes blazing down on him. "I haven't manufactured it at all. I didn't want you to know the truth, though. I didn't want you to know what idiots your sisters were. But Patricia called me an adventuress. Caroline Vanderwelt told me that Patricia had taken her to task for receiving *me*, and had said that she didn't know what society was coming to when it received all sorts of Western freaks and adventuresses with open arms. Ah, now I'm glad to see that you regard the situation seriously."

She moved away, triumphing over Bertie, whose face certainly had grown serious. There was a short silence, and then Marian observed, quite into the air, as it were:

"You see, your family's impossible, don't you?"

"But, sweetheart—"

"I'm not your sweetheart and I'm not your dear Marian. I never said—definitely—that I would marry you, and I'm glad of it now, because I'd hate to break an engagement to you." She laughed dismally, but it served to cover the catch in her voice. "I'm just plain myself, and I belong to myself."

"Well, then, just plain you, if you like that better, or Marian, or Mrs. Lee, or anything that you do like, I'm not asking you to find my family possible, to marry my family. Find me possible. Find it impossible to live without me. Find it possible to marry me."

"No, I can't and I won't; so that's the end of it." Mrs. Lee's words were conclusive. Her tone was defiant, but her eyes grew dark. Bertie almost saw the veil of tears that covered them, and he did see her lips tremble.

"Oh, sweetheart, sweetheart Marian," he cried, "do be reasonable. What do we care for what Patricia

says? What do we care for any one but ourselves?"

"Ah, but I do care for what Patricia says!" Marian's hot temper dried her tears. "I care less for ourselves than for anything else in the world. I care for the world and—and"—her voice grew softer, lower—"and I care most of all for what the world says about your wife. I can never forgive Patricia, and I'll never be your wife until Patricia herself proves to her world that it doesn't dare to say a word against me. So that's the end. This is the end." She made a hopeless gesture with her hands, but her voice was firm.

From that decision Bertie could not move her. With that decision ringing in his ears, he was forced to leave her.

On the following afternoon, Mrs. Lee was again pacing up and down her long, green living-room, not in measured, definite strides, however, but in an irritable, restless fashion. For weeks, Bertie had been in the habit of coming in to help her drink her eleven-o'clock chocolate, but to-day he had failed her. Up to eleven o'clock she had not expected him—no, not in the very least. He had been coming because—well, because they were, in a way, engaged, but no man with any self-respect would come after all the horrid things she had said the night before. When the very slowest of her clocks had finished its last stroke of the hour before noon, however, she knew that she had expected him, had been sure that he would come and—well, at least she didn't want any chocolate—or anything else, for that matter. She telephoned that she was quite unable to go to a luncheon. She ordered her carriage twice, and twice countermanded the order.

At last, Suzanne appeared with a square, purple box, and Mrs. Lee seized it with such inordinate joy that the maid looked at the mistress questioningly. Suzanne knew that they were only Mr. Dumond's violets. They came every day, and why was madame—?

"Shall I arrange them, madame?" The girl held out her hand, confidently.

"No, I will put them in water, myself. Bring me the silver bowl from my table, the—the heart-shaped bowl."

But, after all, the violets meant nothing. Bertie had merely forgotten to tell the florist not to send them. Of course, he had not gone every day to order them! But they were the last she would ever have from him! Tenderly and carefully she untied the purple string—quite as though Bertie had knotted it. She raised the box and drew in a deep breath of the exquisite perfume. There was a note in the box with the blossoms. It was short. There was no greeting, no signature, but it was Bertie's writing, and she kissed it an unnecessary number of times before she read it.

"My father has promised to call upon you this afternoon. Please see him and, afterward, please let me speak to you again."

The words were few enough, but each one of them routed a regiment of the blue devils that had held Mrs. Lee in durance throughout the day.

"Poor old bishop," she laughed. "I suppose Bertie will drag him here by his white hair, shove him in, and then come and demand that I should accept the sacrifice in lieu of an apology from Patricia!"

She heard Suzanne pass through the lower hall, heard the front door open and close, and she summoned all her courage for the interview with the bishop; but the card that was brought to her did not bear Bishop Dumond's name. Instead, she read: "Miss Dumond, Miss Angela Dumond."

"Why, isn't it the bishop?" she gasped, and again the maid looked with anxious inquiry at her mistress. "Oh, of course," Mrs. Lee had already recovered her senses, "of course, Suzanne, show them up and say that I shall be here immediately."

Patricia, the elder sister, and Angela, the younger, were both many years older than Bertie, and assuredly, in appearance, they upheld the dignity of their father's position much more successfully than did that young man.

Now, they followed Suzanne up the stairs, every line of face and body expressing severe disapproval, Patricia firmly and ostentatiously, Angela somewhat nervously. They received in grim silence Suzanne's announcement that her mistress would appear presently.

"A French maid!" whispered Patricia, disdainfully, as soon as Suzanne had disappeared up the stairs. "A French woman instead of a—decent man to open the door! That in itself is enough to arouse suspicion!"

"Is it?" fluttered Angela's answering breath. "To me it would seem quite the other way."

The sisters had seated themselves, facing the stairways leading up and down, so that they might not be taken unawares by their hostess, and they did not hear the faint whirr of the automatic lift behind the green-glass screen. For just an instant, Mrs. Lee accepted the protection of this screen. Had the sisters come in peace or in war? Had Bertie forced them to come, or did they voluntarily carry a flag of truce? Assuredly she had a right to know! She was not left long in doubt.

"The room itself defines the woman!" Patricia whispered, huskily.

"Why, it's not so—so ugly," ventured Angela, faintly. "It shows a lot of money and"—even more faintly—"taste. Are you quite sure that we are right in doing this? Bertram will be so angry and—and she may be all right."

"She may be," sniffed Patricia, "and she may not. She's a woman, and the chances are she's not. I stand to Bertram in our mother's place. But I've the bishop's dignity to uphold, and I intend to do my duty, to protect both. A woman who looks like this Mrs. Lee, as she calls herself—"

It was at this moment that Mrs. Lee stepped forward. She had dressed rather elaborately for the eleven-o'clock breakfast, and was still wearing the white-lace gown that she had put on

for Bertie. Around her neck was a long chain studded with huge amethysts, and from it hung a heavy amethyst cross, this ornament being the only visible expression of her grief for the departed Peter. On her breast were Bertie's violets, in her hands the card of Bertie's sisters. Glancing indefinitely at the sisters, she again read the names.

"Miss Dumond?" she asked.

"I believe that we have met before, Mrs. Lee." Patricia's voice was provocative, but Mrs. Lee ignored it.

"Yes? I had forgotten. You wished to see me? Won't you sit down?"

"Sister—sister wants to see you," murmured Angela.

Mrs. Lee allowed her half-closed, indolent eyes to rest for an instant on the younger sister. Then she devoted her entire attention to Patricia, although in so doing she lost no quiver of the younger eyes, no quaver of the younger lips.

"I'm rather pressed for time this afternoon," Mrs. Lee began. "If there is something that I can do for you——"

Her voice sounded like the lazy purr of a cat, she leaned back in her low chair with the insolent, indolent grace of a cat, and her heavy lids and bronze lashes concealed the fires that should have warned even Miss Patricia.

"I think it best to speak plainly," began Miss Dumond, her rigid spine and icy voice expressing her resentment of Mrs. Lee's impertinent patronage. "There's no use in beating about the bush."

"No?" questioned Mrs. Lee. "I've never tried it."

"We—that is, I—have come to see you about Bertram." Miss Dumond seemed in danger of forgetting the episcopal dignity. Flippancy was a thing she abhorred. Her voice grew sharp and aggressive.

"Bertram?" questioned Mrs. Lee, absently turning her rings about on her fingers. "Oh, you mean Mr. Dumond. I—I have had the pleasure of meeting him."

Patricia brushed aside the low, pur-

ring voice. "I said that I intended to speak plainly, Mrs. Lee, and I do. Bertram is the son of a bishop, but he occasionally forgets his position and the dignity that belongs to it."

Mrs. Lee's eyebrows expressed surprise, and her voice murmured: "The dignity of the position of a bishop's son?"

"I have repeatedly warned Bertram"—Patricia ignored the interruption—"but he refuses to listen to me. Now I am taking the only course that is left open. Bertram is very dear to me. But my father's position is also dear, and I will not permit Bertram to be forced into any marriage that will injure that position."

The words were spoken definitely, clearly, and Patricia paused for an instant. Angela's frightened breath was the only sound that could be heard, and then Mrs. Lee's lazy, careless voice answered Patricia.

"But what can I do?" she asked.

"I assure you, my dear Miss Dumond, that I cannot help you in the matter. I had heard vaguely, indefinitely—such things do not interest me particularly—that you were troubled because Mr. Dumond was—how do you express it?—entangled in some affair with an adventuress, but I fail to see what I can do. And—and do you not think that interference in an affair of that kind is dangerous? I have known cases where untimely interference merely forced undesirable conclusions. Let me give you a bit of advice—for your brother's sake. Will it not be very unwise to go too far in your interference?" The voice was still low and purring. There was not the faintest suggestion of jungle snarls, of tearing claws and lashing tail. But Mrs. Lee was now leaning forward, her eyes full on Miss Patricia's face. "There are some things, you know, that can never be forgiven. There are some things that even a brother cannot pardon."

Miss Patricia was gasping for breath. Such insolence she had never heard, but before she could answer it Suzanne appeared with a card.

"I am expecting Mr. Dumond," Mrs.

Lee said, as she held out her hand for the bit of pasteboard. "You will not care to meet him here? Ah, yes, but you would assuredly meet him on the stairs. The elevator is behind the glass screen. It will take you down."

As the Dumond petticoats scurried behind the screen, she added to herself: "It's rather lucky for Bertie that I am a lady, and that I don't always let my hair control my temper!"

But only for an instant could Mrs. Lee enjoy her triumph over Patricia. She considered that she had triumphed. Had she permitted Patricia to say anything that it would be impossible to forgive? Of course, Patricia had thought things, but a person is not responsible—that is to say, he cannot be held responsible for what he thinks, only for what he says.

At this point in her soliloquy, Mrs. Lee was obliged to move forward to greet the bishop, for it was the bishop's card that she held in her hand. Not for five minutes did she realize that the mechanism of the automatic elevator had not been explained to Patricia and Angela, and that they would be held prisoners behind the screen throughout the bishop's visit.

Now, the bishop had been told by his son that Mrs. Lee was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, the dearest, sweetest, most adorable creature that had ever lived—an angel; and the bishop had been told by his daughters that Mrs. Lee was a common, Western adventuress, absurdly artificial, a most undesirable acquaintance for Bertram, an absolutely impossible wife for Bertram. The bishop, being worldly wise, expected neither the angel portrayed by his son nor the demon depicted by his daughter, but he was wholly unprepared to see the half-shy, half-appealing, childish creature that advanced to meet him.

"I—I so appreciate this honor, Bishop Dumond," she murmured.

"I assure you, my dear Mrs. Lee, that the honor and the pleasure are mine."

It was in peace, then, that the bishop had come! Marian dexterously in-

duced him to sit down with his back to the window, reserving for herself a low chair in a tiny patch of western sunlight that framed her exquisite face in an aureole of flame, that revealed to the bishop her lovely eyes as green and unfathomable as the ocean, that seemed to lose its own life in the amethysts about her throat, in the amethyst cross that she held in her fingers. To the bishop, she looked like a jeweled saint in a stained-glass window.

For five minutes, neither went outside the monotonous commonplaces of a first conversation. Nothing that the bishop said conveyed the impression that he was studying the girl before him. Nothing that she said revealed any desire to create an impression. But now, suddenly, Mrs. Lee realized the presence of the bishop's daughters behind the green-glass screen. An execrable situation! An opportunity not to be lost! The first thought held out but a second. Of the other she took instant advantage.

The bishop was congratulating her upon her social success, for the bishop was not only worldly wise, but wise and worldly.

"A very superficial success, I'm afraid," sighed Mrs. Lee. "A woman in my position can claim nothing for herself, you know, not even a social success."

"But, my dear Mrs. Lee," began the bishop; and then, remembering Patricia's warnings, he stopped. Just what did Mrs. Lee mean by her position?

"So many people think it very fortunate to have money as I have it." She was answering the bishop's unspoken thought. "They never realize how it isolates one from all human companionship, from friendship, from—" her voice sank—"from love." Her eyes were downcast, and her slender fingers followed the facets of the amethysts in her cross. "Especially is it so when one is left alone, alone with just the money, when one is so—so young, you know. It is very hard to be cut off from everything."

The bishop was recalled to the object of his visit.

"But Bertram has told me—Bertram asked me—" He hesitated, realizing the difficulties of his position.

"Oh, Bert—Bertram, Mr. Dumond, has been very kind," murmured Mrs. Lee. "I assure you I appreciate kindness like his, but he is only a boy, and—"

The unfathomable green eyes were raised to the bishop's. Never had he been called upon to sound such depths. "Bertram has assured me that his feelings for you are infinitely more than kind."

Mrs. Lee smiled sadly, wistfully. "Bertie assures me that he adores me," she answered. "Possibly he has told you that he does, but—the adoration of a boy! What is it?"

"The adoration of a boy may be very sincere."

"Ah, sincere, yes; and it means so much to him, but what is it compared with the love of a man who has known life and seen it? What does it mean to a woman who longs for life?"

Again the bronze lashes fluttered upward, and the bishop gazed for an instant into the still, green depths that they so jealously guarded.

"Bertram has told me that he had great hopes that you would marry him." The bishop had cast all diplomacy aside. "And I—I—"

"I feel that I shall never marry," murmured Mrs. Lee, when the bishop's hesitation had grown unendurable. "My husband—" She stopped.

"Ah, yes!" The bishop for the first time realized that Mrs. Lee's bereavement was a most recent affair. "We all feel that way for a time. A life cut off like that leaves a great desolation where it has been, but time fills it, my dear; believe me, time fills it. Even I—"

"It is so good of you to appreciate how I feel," interrupted Mrs. Lee, "but it is not only that. You see, Mr. Lee placed such confidence in me. He gave unreservedly everything that he had, and, while he may have realized that I might marry again, I feel that he

relied so on my judgment to select a worthy guardian of his fortune. I would like to make some great and good use of it. I would like to marry some one who would make a great and good use of it."

"But one does not marry for reasons of that sort!" The bishop spoke sentimentally. "The true marriage can be based only on love."

"But I sometimes feel," cried Mrs. Lee, "that I could truly love a man of that sort, that he would be the kind of man I could love."

Again the green eyes were raised to the bishop's, and a curious suggestion ran through the bishop's mind. Had he seen it in those aquamarine depths, or had his own brain given it birth? He did not know, but he sought a refuge from it in a platitude.

"Love comes and goes as it wills, you know. It cannot be driven, it cannot be coerced. I am sorry for Bertram. I think that his devotion and— and love for you are very sincere, but I can appreciate that he is not the sort of man that you could love."

Was the bishop accepting her ultimatum concerning Bertram somewhat too easily? Patricia could not see the light in the bishop's eyes. Patricia must hear something more definite.

"I must have some one to look up to, some one to revere. Mr. Dumond is all that is dear and sweet. But—"

"There, there, my dear!" The bishop's voice was low and full of comfort. "You must not take life so seriously. You are sorry for Bertram, but we can make it all easy for him, we—"

The bishop was holding her hand in one of his, stroking it gently with the other.

"I knew that *you* would understand me, that *you* would appreciate my feelings." There was actually a sob in Mrs. Lee's low voice. "Your words are so comforting, so *sympatical*!"

For fifteen minutes, the bishop felt called upon to explain just how and why it was so easy for him to sympathize with her—he had been so lonely in his own home since his wife's

death many years before. Bertram had always been away at school, in Paris, and his daughters—well, neither Angela nor Patricia was—*sympatica*, if he might use her sweet Italian word. He had often wondered if it would not be well for him to marry again. And now it seemed to him that—

It was here that Mrs. Lee murmured that he had so much, so very much, to offer to any woman; and it was soon after this that the bishop rose to take his leave.

"I have trespassed too much on your time," he said, holding her slim, white hand in his. "But I may come again, very soon? And you will let me help you? You will rely on me?"

And he still held her hand while she assured him that his advice would be her greatest comfort, the greatest possible comfort that she could have.

When the front door had closed upon the bishop, Mrs. Lee, passing behind the glass screen, discovered Miss Angela cowering in one corner of the dainty pink elevator, and Miss Patricia, white and still, staring somewhat defiantly from the other.

"The—the boy—" gasped Miss Angela.

"Why—why, you didn't understand the elevator?" Mrs. Lee's tone expressed surprise and contrition. "You will pardon me, I am sure."

She pressed the spring that was half concealed in the quilted satin, and, without another word from Miss Dumond or from Miss Angela Dumond they passed down out of the range of Mrs. Lee's vision, and in another moment she heard the front door close again upon angry, determined, feminine footsteps.

When Bertram Dumond appeared at Mrs. Lee's door soon after the bishop's departure, Suzanne informed him that Mrs. Lee regretted exceedingly that she could not see him then, but that she would be charmed to have him take breakfast with her the following morning at eleven.

It was some time after eleven the next day, and Bertram was smoking

a cigarette, while Mrs. Lee reclined indolently in a deep, green-leather chair. She had greeted her ex-fiancé, as she called him, with an extravagant eulogy of the bishop; she had detailed certain parts of the interview for his benefit, and she concluded her expurgated narrative with the remark:

"And while, of course, he's a duck of a bishop and all that, you needn't imagine that his visit will make me overlook Patricia's insolence. Nothing can do that save an apology from Patricia—an open apology, and I'm not sure that—that she'll be willing to apologize."

Now, Mrs. Lee had not told Bertie anything about his sisters' visit. She was not sure that she cared to have him know that she had—quite inadvertently—forced them to play the part of eavesdroppers.

"The bishop will doubtless tell your sisters," she went on, "and—and you, that I've no intention whatsoever of marrying you. No, you really must not call me Marian, and you mustn't come here any more just at present. You— But the bishop can explain it all so much better than I can."

At this moment Suzanne brought in a long, white pasteboard box. Marian opened it and, holding the card that accompanied the flowers in one hand, lifted the tissue and cotton that enveloped them.

"Why, they are orchids!" she cried. "How perfectly lovely!"

"Why, they are orchids!" scoffed Bertie, at the same moment. "I call them hideous. I don't see how you can encourage those imbeciles," he added, sulkily.

"Imbeciles!" she echoed, laughing as she read the card.

"Yes, imbeciles. Nobody but a fool sends orchids. Nobody but a degenerate ass would admire a thing like that." He was holding at arm's length one of the weird, uncanny blossoms that he had lifted from the box. "No color, no shape, no perfume, no anything to recommend it to any one but a silly jackanapes or an ambling dotard. Oh, you needn't look

at me in that way. I know you hate them."

"Oh, Bertie, Bertie!" Mrs. Lee was crying between her peals of laughter.

"I don't care who sent them, anyway," he sulked. "Who did? I'll wager it was an old fool, or a young one."

Marian held up the card, and the name stared at him in stern, uncompromising Roman type.

"Father!" he gasped.

"Yes," assented Mrs. Lee, innocently. "It was awfully sweet of him, wasn't it? You may read his message, too, if you like. 'Permit me to offer the most artificial flower in the world to the most natural woman I have ever met!' Charming, isn't it? But the bishop is rather inclined to combine contrasts, is he not?"

There was a short silence. Several remarks, pertinent and impertinent, occurred to Bertie, but he refrained from expressing them to his companion, and it was she who broke the silence.

"I never appreciated the great glory and dignity of your father's position until I saw him yesterday. I don't wonder that Patricia is anxious to uphold it in every way."

There was another silence which Bertie might have broken, but still he could not trust himself to speak. Perhaps it was natural enough that the bishop should—

"If I have the moonfish taken out"—Mrs. Lee's eyes were on her glass screen—"mightn't it be well to replace it with something more vivid, more gorgeous?"

"The other night you wanted to replace it with a hundred goldfish, if I remember rightly." Bertie's tone was indifferent toward the goldfish and somewhat sulky toward Mrs. Lee.

"Yes, but you see," she answered, "the other night it seemed to me that, if I had the moonfish taken out—I have been awfully fond of that moonfish, too—there'd be nothing else to do but to fill in a lot of little small things, small fishes, you know. Now, I'm merely considering the other idea."

Here Bertie remembered suddenly that, when Marian had spoken before of changing the decoration of the screen, her words had seemed to have some ulterior meaning. His eyes traveled slowly from her face to the silvery moonfish, and in their passage they crossed the purple orchids.

In an instant, he sprang to his feet. "Good heavens! Marian, you don't mean——"

Smiling a bit maliciously, she nodded an assent.

"You mean, you'd marry the bishop!"

"Marry the bishop!" It was her turn to express vehement surprise. "Bertie, you're almost sacrilegious. Of course, I wouldn't marry the bishop, but——" She stopped.

"But what?" he demanded.

"Why, I might flirt—oh, there's no connection, really between the moonfish and the bishop. I was only teasing you because you are so stupid. I don't want you to understand anything, anyway. But can't you see how dreadful it would be for the bishop—for the bishop's dignity, I mean, to—to fall in love—I mean to flirt with—to have an adventuress flirt with him? Can't you see that a bishop in love with an adventuress would be ridiculous? The very idea of such a thing would terrify most people, don't you think? And they'd do almost anything to prevent such a thing, wouldn't they?"

"But, Marian, surely you——"

"Oh, surely I'm not going to do anything more than I have done. And surely, too, I'm not going to explain anything more than I have explained. I'll tell you one thing, though. It's an awfully good play sometimes to force your opponent's hand by——"

Here Suzanne appeared with a note, and Mrs. Lee, reading it, hurriedly finished her sentence:

"By apparently—throwing away a big trump. It's evidently a successful play. Listen to this:

"MY DEAR MRS. LEE: Will you not come in for a cup of tea on Friday next? I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you

before that, but I am so anxious to have Bertram's friends meet you.

"Most cordially yours,
"PATRICIA DUMOND.

"It's rather unfortunate that she's too old for a maid of honor, isn't it?"

"But, sweetheart!" ejaculated Bertie.

"Yes," assented Marian. Her voice was sweet, her arms were about his neck. But before her lips met his she said, somewhat enigmatically, it seemed to Bertie:

"I'm so thankful that she cared more for the bishop's dignity than she did for the bishop's son."



A CHARACTER SKETCH

SHE'S a native of Manhattan, knows a pile of Greek and Latin,
And her various accomplishments are myriad.
Words alone could scarce express them, so in characters I'll dress them,
If you'll bear with me in patience for a .

She has written books a-plenty, though she's scarcely two-and-XX,
As a literary light she's bound to flash;
Few her = are at fiction, such her brilliancy of diction,
And her style is full of piquancy and —.

She will stand up in the middle of an audience and fiddle
With as perfect nonchalance as did old Nero;
And her hearers always show forth with their hands and feet, &c.,
That the atmosphere is far this side of o.

At a card game she's a corker, this young thoroughbred New Yorker,
And her specialty's the little ivory disk;
With a smile serene and sunny she'll be raking in your money
If the same you are so reckless *.

To observe her !! on the stock and bond ' "
Makes one feel he would be perfectly content
Just to marry this divinity and spend throughout ∞
The income on her pile at 4%.

Though her talents are so varied, this fair creature's still unmarried;
You would think some chap the chance would try to collar;
Yet, with learning beyond ?, perfect health and sound digestion,
She hasn't got a solitary \$.

FREDERICK H. PIERSON, JR.



TEACHER—Remember, children, always build your house on a rock.
BRIGHT BOY—Well, papa built a Summer hotel on the sand, and made a fortune out of it.

CONCERNING TOMLINS

By John Harwood Bacon

"**W**HO is 'the child'?" As Wilson had been "doing police" for nearly five months, he felt privileged to treat a new reporter's advent with a measure of patronage.

"My, what a pretty boy!" gushed Miss Eldredge, at the next desk. Miss Eldredge had been on the *Times* for over eleven years, but was still as coy as on the day of her first assignment.

"Hope he'll get my run, and I'll be given hotels," muttered Wilson. "I'm getting tired of all-night work."

Miss Eldredge gave another look.

"How pink and clean he looks! I'll have to take him under my wing." She redirected attention to the anecdote for her "What She Sees and Hears" column, a Sunday feature which an afternoon paper had burlesqued under the suggestive caption, "What He Smokes and Dreams."

The newcomer's arrival was a matter of no general interest. As the reporters loitered in, one by one, each went straight to his desk and became absorbed in that section of the morning's news which he himself had written the night before, giving no heed to the boy standing uneasily beside the city editor.

The *Times* staff was constantly changing. New men were taken on, old men dropped. Oftentimes a youngster would "fall down" on an important assignment, and another would be recruited in his place. Occasionally, an old-timer would select an inopportune occasion for a celebration, and, in consequence, find his desk allotted to another, on his remorseful and unshaven reappearance.

Frequently, a dismantled derelict would drift into the office and receive a spare job at the copy-desk—a favor which usually terminated within a fortnight. At rare intervals, a "cyclone" would strike the shop, and the entire staff would find itself reorganized, some men unexpectedly advanced and others unceremoniously dismissed. A new reporter, therefore, was of far less interest than a study of the late edition for the purpose of finding "how much of that story of mine was hacked to pieces by that carpenter of a city editor."

It was nearly half-past one, the hour for afternoon assignments.

"Wilson!"

Sharply, almost surlily, came the summons from the city editor's desk.

"Ten to one, I go up," whispered Wilson, jubilantly. Being on duty long after the other reporters had finished work, he was not due at the office until three o'clock. His summons at that hour could therefore have but one meaning; the new man was to be given "police."

"This is Mr. Tomlins, Wilson," was the editor's curt introduction. "He's to have your run, and you're to be tried on 'marine.' Take him around this afternoon and introduce him, and Butler will put you on to the ropes of your new run to-morrow. No special assignments to-day; only, look out for a follow-up story on that State-street robbery." Follow-up stories were Mr. Edwards's hobby.

"Come along, Tomlins," said Wilson, somewhat ungraciously. He was disappointed at getting nothing better than "marine," which permitted short-

er hours, but demanded more "trotting around."

The new man followed obediently. He was a timid-looking little chap, with cheeks whose pinkness made him look absurdly youthful, and curly hair which obstinately resisted a palpable effort to part it on the side.

"Just come?" asked Wilson, as they started below in the elevator.

"An hour ago," answered the new man, with a smile. "I didn't want to lose any time."

"Pretty much of a kid," was Wilson's mental verdict. "Ever do newspaper work before?" he demanded.

"Not very much. I've been running a little paper in Kaloosa, but"—with modest candor—"I couldn't make it pay."

So he had been an editor—even though an unsuccessful one! Wilson, whose apprenticeship had been served as a mere helper on a country sheet, became more conciliatory.

"We'll go to the station first. Most of the tips on this run—accidents and that sort of thing—come from there. Then we'll stop in at the jail and the morgue."

"If you'll explain everything to me just as fully as you can," ventured the little man, "I'll consider it a big favor. You see, I'm awfully green about work on a city paper, and—and, naturally, I'm anxious to succeed."

There was an honest little ring in the appeal, which quite disarmed Wilson. The impulse to lord it over this novice vanished in a twinkling.

"There's nothing much to learn," he said, encouragingly. "Simply routine, after you get used to things."

"It'll probably take me some days to get my bearings," suggested Tomlins.

So it did; but, on the whole, his start was satisfactory. He learned to scan the police blotter and the morgue records, and gradually to distinguish between news worth printing in detail and that suitable only for "city briefs." He learned to drop work instantly, and rush to the fire-alarm list whenever the office indicator sounded; and he learned

to utilize the friendliness of a plain-clothes man and the good-nature of a desk sergeant. Moreover, he found that he had much to unlearn; in fact, points to be remembered were scarcely more numerous than those to be forgotten.

"Don't you see that 'at' Eighth and Cedar streets tells the same story as 'at the corner of' those streets?" demanded a seemingly furious city editor. "And, for heaven's sake, don't let me have to tell you again that the *Times's* style requires 'Mr.' or else initials after a minister's title. You may say 'Rev. Smith' in Kaloosa, but it won't go in this office."

Shamefacedly, Tomlins returned to his type-writer, while the city editor remarked to Blake, his assistant, that "for such a kid" the new man was doing fairly well.

Getting acquainted with the other men on the staff was rather slow work, the average term of police reporters being scarcely long enough to warrant immediate friendships. But gradually the name of Tomlins—Tommy Tomlins, it was—became familiar, and its curly-headed owner was accepted on a basis of newspaper camaraderie.

For the first few nights, the new reporter accompanied Wilson to Biersach's, the "place" where, after midnight, every member of the staff, from the managing editor to the copy-boys, lingered over a chop or a sandwich and a mug of beer, and enjoyed the first real respite of the long day. But, after two or three visits to Biersach's, Tomlins stopped going to supper with the others. As soon as his evening assignments were disposed of, and he was free to seek a bite to eat before entering upon the "dog watch," he would mysteriously disappear.

"Where do you feed now?" demanded Wilson, after Tomlins, on three successive nights, had declined his invitation to "go over to the Dutchman's."

"I live only a short way up the street," explained the little man, straightforwardly, "so I go home for lunch."

"Economize on a ten-cent plate of beans, and you'll own a trust some day," volunteered Wilson, thoughtlessly.

Tomlins flushed, but said nothing.

It was nearly a month later when the city editor, while locking up his desk one night, exclaimed in an amused undertone to Blake:

"Look at that!"

"What?" asked the assistant, impaling two short items on a spindle, and clearing away with a single sweep the debris of several hours' copy-reading.

"Tomlins."

Blake turned, and saw the police reporter effusively greeting a rather pretty girl, a year or two his junior, who was standing smilingly on the threshold.

"Who is she?"

"From the telephone office, probably. He has his nerve with him, bringing 'em up here!"

"Learning city ways fast. Not such a child, after all!"

The city editor smiled grimly. His work for the day was finished, and he felt in fairly good humor.

As he and Blake passed out, Tomlins kept on talking with his midnight visitor, apparently undisturbed by the fact that several curious glances were sent in his direction.

"Wait till I call up the station to see if anything is doing," he said, as his superior disappeared, "and we'll go and get something to eat."

The following night, however, the city editor's mood was far less amiable. A fire and a railroad accident were providing extra work for everybody, and, as luck would have it, Mr. Edwards glanced up from a stack of unread copy, just as Tomlins—who should have been devoting sole attention to a section of the fire story—nodded and smiled in the direction of the door. It was only one nod and one smile, and the young woman for whom they were intended remained quietly near the file table, while Tomlins reburied himself in the details of the conflagration. But the city editor's wrath was aroused; he scowled and bided his time.

"See here, Tomlins," he said, sharply, as the police reporter turned in what he had written, "we can't have you bringing girls up here in the office. You're hired to work, not," he added, brutally, "to chase women."

Tomlins's cheeks turned scarlet, and a lump crept into his throat. Then he blurted out:

"That's my wife."

"Eh? . . . Oh!" It was the city editor's turn to flush. He bent over Tomlins's copy, and asked, abruptly: "Is this all of the fire story?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you get the insurance list?"

"Yes."

"There ought to be a good follow-up on this to-morrow."

Tomlins went to Mrs. Tomlins, while the city editor gasped under his breath, "Wouldn't that craze you?"

When little Mrs. Tomlins appeared the following night, no word of protest came from the desk in the corner. Nor was official criticism provoked when it became apparent that her calls would be regular occurrences. Every evening at the luncheon hour she entered quietly, sent a timid glance in the direction of Tomlins's desk, gravely answered his smile, and retired to the file table. She never intruded. If Tomlins was busy, she glanced over the files until he was free to join her. Before long, the other men would nod pleasantly, or stop for a word or two of greeting as they passed out. She was a sweet-faced, soft-voiced little girl, no more resembling a full-fledged wife than Tomlins did a completed husband. Even the city editor, as he noted how carefully she held herself aloof, assumed toward her a manner surprisingly cordial, going so far one evening as to send the copy-boy across the room with a chair. Thereafter, that chair remained near the door for the exclusive use of Mrs. Tomlins.

"I should think she'd get tired, sitting up till midnight," Mr. Edwards remarked to the night editor one evening, after reporting that every-

thing in his department was "cleaned up."

"Midnight! Till the paper goes to press."

"What!"

"Sure. She stays as long as he does."

"Until four?"

"Yep. Comes back after lunch, and sits patiently by herself while he goes his rounds. Sometimes takes a walk with him over to the station, but usually practises on his type-writer or sews till he's ready to go home."

"Well, wouldn't that craze you?"

The night editor agreed that it would, but ventured to add that it didn't do any particular harm. "He does his work all right, doesn't he?" he suggested, by way of extenuation.

"Yes, fairly so."

"Sort of a pleasant little chap. Nice girl, too. He says she insisted upon this arrangement. They haven't any friends in town, and she was lonesome."

"As long as he attends to business, I don't suppose it matters if he brings up all his relatives," conceded the city editor.

For the better part of a year, Mrs. Tomlins's coming was as regular as clockwork. New men came and went, but Tomlins held his position. His wife's presence interfered not with the garnering of police news, and therefore troubled no one. But, without warning, her visits suddenly ceased.

A week's failure to appear occasioned comment.

"Where's your wife?" asked Wilson, bluntly, one evening, as Tomlins started out alone.

"She's not very well," was the answer, given with some hesitation. "In fact, she—she won't be around again for some time."

Wilson understood. "Oh!" he said.

The other members of the staff were duly informed, and the news occasioned general interest. Not a man in the shop but liked little Tomlins; not one but had felt in some small measure the influence of a tender little smile which had been timidly

directed toward the police reporter's desk each evening on the stroke of twelve.

Had not the secret leaked out in this prompt manner, Tomlins's troubled expression would eventually have shown that something serious was impending. As the weeks crept by, his cheeks lost their color, while the corners of the mouth revealed two hard little lines that had no business on the face of a boy.

"I'm worried, Wilson," was the wholly superfluous admission which he made one evening, after the others had gone. The marine reporter listened sympathetically.

"How's the wife coming along?" he asked.

"The doctor says that I haven't any reason to be frightened; that she is doing as well as they ever do," was the hopeful answer. "But it's hard on a woman, Wilson; don't you know it is? We men don't realize—we we don't begin to realize."

Even to Wilson, "men and women" seemed hardly the words to describe Tomlins and little Mrs. Tomlins.

"Oh, she'll come through it all right," he said, awkwardly. "When—when is it expected?"

"Late this week—Saturday, probably." Tomlins's lips trembled, and he shook his curly head anxiously.

"Cheer up," suggested Wilson, helplessly.

"Do you mind my telling troubles like this, Wilson? It's a sort of relief to talk things over with some one besides myself. I'm not complaining—it isn't that, but—but I can't help worrying."

"Go ahead. Talk as much as you want to, old man."

"The money part doesn't worry me at all—though, of course, this is going to set me back a good deal. But my credit is good, and I can work. You see, when we left Kaloosa we hardly expected it would cost us quite so much to live here. Eighteen dollars a week sounded pretty big to me. But Lucy was mighty plucky, and we got started all right. We were mar-

ried just as soon as I got this chance on the *Times*. Her folks were willing, and I didn't have any folks, so all we did was to come and start housekeeping. Of course, it wasn't much like real housekeeping, I suppose"—as if fearing his words might be construed as boasting—"but our two dinky rooms have answered very well.

... Only, I didn't figure, Wilson—and I should have—of course, there's no excuse for my not having done so—on anything like this happening. ... And—and I suppose it's rather hard for every father, the first time; don't you suppose it is?"

Wilson nodded, soberly. "Sure," he said.

"And now," burst out little Tomlins, impulsively, "if anything should happen to that wife of mine, Wilson, I shouldn't want to live, that's all!" Two large tears trickled down his cheeks, and were impatiently brushed away. "I'm a regular damned baby, I'm afraid," he said.

"Keep up your nerve, old man," protested Wilson, uncomfortably. "Let's go over to Biersach's and get a bean."

"No, I guess I'll chase up home a minute."

Even though staff etiquette hardly permitted an open avowal of good wishes on so delicate a theme, more than one *Times* man felt deeply for little Tomlins. The end of the week approached without alarming bulletins; but tired eyes and an absurd "old" look bore evidence of the depth of the little man's anxiety.

Friday night arrived, and Tomlins, pale and careworn, came in from the street. "Some time before morning," he had whispered, in a half-frightened tone to Wilson early in the evening. "The woman with her promised to 'phone me if—if I'm needed."

Before returning to the office, after covering his evening assignments, he had run up home to ascertain that, so far, all was well.

"I'll be back soon, Lucy girl," he had whispered to the pale little woman,

who was trying her bravest to smile. "Don't worry, dear."

With a parting injunction to Mrs. Riley about telephoning, he hurried to the office to write up the cheering details of a suicide at the Soldiers' Home.

Every time the telephone rang—an average of once a minute—poor little Tomlins glanced up nervously, then resolutely returned to his work. Wilson noted this, and went to the city editor's desk for a moment's conversation.

"Tomlins," he said, on returning, "I'll do the 'dog watch' to-night."

Tomlins looked up, gratefully. "Thank you, Wilson," he said, huskily. "It's awfully good of you, and I'll—"

"That's all right, old man," interposed Wilson, hastily. "As soon as you get your stuff up, turn it in, and vamoose."

Tomlins finished his suicide story, and hurried away.

"Wilson!"

The city editor's voice, harsh and rasping, summoned the marine reporter to the copy-desk, the following afternoon.

"You're to cover police to-day—probably for several days. Tomlins won't be down—"

"All right," in an awed tone. "Is—?"

"—and the men are putting in a quarter apiece for some flowers. Do you want to contribute?"

"Yes, sir. But—but is she dead?"

"Dead? Who said anything about dead? I can't waste my time explaining things! They're for Tomlins's baby, and if you don't want to contribute, you needn't. And—and see that you get a good follow-up story on that gas-house explosion! ... All this blamed nonsense over a baby!"

... And—and, Wilson, come back here; what are you running away for before I'm through? If you have time, you might stop in on your way back from the gas-house to see how Mrs. Tomlins is getting along."

A BALLADE OF LOST KISSES

YOU who by seashore and mountain pine
 Have captured kisses not a few,
 Who have taken your share, as I have mine,
 Of the gifts that the kind gods gave to you—
 Sweet is the list you've to reckon through
 And none to be marked with a vain regret—
 Yet, since with pleasure there must be rue,
 What of the kisses you didn't get?

Gracious the lips that did not decline
 To pay the toll that you counted due.
 A kiss as love's token or friendship's sign—
 What does it matter, one or two?
 A fond reward for a worshiper true—
 Gloves to a kiss make a crafty bet!
 All who a roguish lass pursue,
 What of the kisses you didn't get?

Was it, perchance, that the lamplight's shine
 Lay over-bright where you said adieu?
 Were the eyes too careless or too divine
 That you lost yourself in their depths of blue?
 The face you left when the Spring winds blew,
 Was it laughter lit or teardrop wet
 That you somehow shirked what you meant to do—
 What of the kisses you didn't get?

ENVOY

Lads and lovers of every hue,
 Ancients, who linger a little yet,
 You boast of the kisses that once you knew—
 But what of the kisses you didn't get?

EDWARD BARRON.



APPROPRIATE

TICKERLY—Why do they say "dabble in stocks"?
 TAPESON—It must be on account of the water that is in most of them.



MODERN life has produced at least two wonders—a clock that won't stop for two years, and a cook that won't stop for two weeks.

THE LINK

By Stephen French Whitman

"IS it possible that these rooms belong to a Japanese?"

The American stared about him deliberately, his white face and white linen gleaming in the semi-gloom. He raised his eyebrows, noting the heavy hangings that muffled the evening clatter of New York streets; the weighty, gilded picture-frames; the deep leather chairs, the few ponderous, masculine ornaments. The pervading air of refinement was distinctly Occidental.

"I am disappointed," he said.

"Why?" asked his companion, quietly.

This was a little man, nearly lost in one of the great chairs. He lighted a cigarette; the flame showed high, brown cheek-bones, full, slightly oblique eyelids, a short, bristling mustache of black. He sat up, his shirt crackling over his diminutive chest.

"Why?" he repeated. "This is New York. You have never seen Tamamura? I assure you that he would not wear a kimono to shave in. Long ago, in Tokyo, he was distinctly—er—progressive."

The American shrugged his shoulders, and sat down in a long chair.

"The deuce!" he said, with a short laugh. "You new Japanese have completely buried your lacquer armor and—other things, together."

The Japanese laughed the polite, staccato laugh of his kind.

"You are disappointed," he said, speaking slowly and with a nicer regard for enunciation than his companion, "you are disappointed because we Japanese of to-day are not book Japanese—play Japanese. You will find

a few still across the water. But when your illustrious commodore opened our country, he dug the grave for our lacquer armor. We are, I suppose, naturally—er—eclectic. We have come out to do business with you, for one thing, and we have lost our pretty ways. But we have yours in exchange—not so pretty, but more practical. We have lost old politesse, you see, old ideals, and—old gods. Most of us do very well without them all. There are compensations."

"And this Tamamura?"

"You see," said the little man, waving a slim hand, "they might be your rooms, the rooms of any prosperous, unmarried, well-bred, middle-aged Westerner. Tamamura is quite that. His name and his—er—physical exterior are Japanese, that is all. His brain—who knows? One cannot quite eradicate racial instinct except by trepanning and cutting, I suppose. He has eradicated a great deal, in one manner or another. I am sorry he is not in. I would have liked you to meet him. . . . It is gloomy here, isn't it, in spite of all these things about? Something too solemn—almost a little like a—mausoleum? Perhaps we can find the electric buttons?"

The little man got up and wandered to the door. Suddenly, he gave an exclamation of satisfaction, and the place blazed with light.

He stood by the door, darkly yellow, dapper in diminutive evening clothes, smiling almost smugly about the lighted room. His companion heaved himself from the long chair, and once more paced heavily around the rug, his pale face expressing renewed curiosity.

"Really, not a cloisonné vase, not a Satsuma cup, nor a bronze minnow. Bronzes—yes—of Gérôme's! A Cellini sort of medallion! A genre picture of—of Chayllery, by Jovel! Why here, in heaven's name?"

"He is, as I told you, very progressive." There seemed almost to be a thread of pride in the thin voice of the Japanese, for the fellow-countryman who had so effectually buried his beginnings under these things.

"He is very progressive. See here. He has eradicated the last true native repulsion. Here is a nude of Henner's."

The American continued his inspection.

"Tell me something about him," he said, examining the green-and-white Henner. The Japanese lighted another cigarette.

"First," he said, "a Kyoto man, of an old family. Iyeyasu's warriors they were once, fierce little chaps, all swords and honor. He was married in his youth—a real romance, I have heard, rare enough when both houses are so eminently—er—respectable. You would have liked him then—ha! ha!—you would have written a story about him then, no doubt. He was picturesque, and wore kimonos, and lived between paper walls.

"His wife died young, and he came to Tokyo. He got some small offices and raised large interests. He turned progressive, and, consequently, made money, became new Japanese. He came to America. Now he is decidedly rich. He has been very successful."

"He seems to have lost something," said the other.

"He does? Ah, I see. He has lost his old gods. I believe—yes, he was a Buddhist before he knew better."

"And now?"

"Now? He knows better. It is a pretty religion. I suppose one is as good as another. Have you noticed that the lights do not make the room any less—tomblake?"

"Yes," said the American, curiously. "There is a little of that, though why, with all these pleasant things about— I'm going to explore

—to be rude. What's behind that curtain?"

"Bedroom?" ventured the Japanese, coughing over his cigarette.

"Brass bed," prophesied the American, moving toward the door, "mahogany dressing-case and—hello! Kobayashi, come here. I think I've found something Japanese!"

The little man joined him, and looked into the inner room. When he saw, against a wall, a little gold-and-lacquer case on a stand, his narrow eyes widened. He slipped in and stood before it.

"Remarkable!" he ejaculated.

It was a little *butsudan*, a Buddhist household shrine, with closed gold-and-lacquer doors carved like temple gates. The chasing on the hinges was exquisite. The lock was a tiny gold flower. Under the American's hand it clicked, and the doors swung open.

"Ahaw!"—one long-drawn, smothered exclamation from the Japanese.

Inside, on the raised, gold-plated shelf, there were three objects. There was an upright tablet of wood, something like a miniature, foot-high tombstone, with ideographs gilded on its face. There was another like it, a trifle larger and more ornate, but the first ideograph on this was scarlet; the rest were gold, as on the other. In front of the first stood an eggshell cup. There was dust over everything.

"What significance?" asked the American, looking down at the yellow face that was curiously contorted by astonishment.

The Japanese drew a long breath.

"Tch, tch, tch! It is very remarkable. I find it rather hard to believe. Tamamura! Tch, tch! . . . Well it is a *butsudan*, a shrine. In Japan the Buddhists keep the tablets of their dead in them. This tablet—this smaller tablet—is one. It is of his dead wife! Here is her posthumous title in gold on it. See? This other—Now, it is a custom, when a very dear wife dies, and the husband takes a vow never to marry again, for him to have an *ihai*—a tablet—made with her name in gold on it, and another made

with his name on it, the first ideograph in red. And he places them both in the shrine. And every day he sets a cup of fresh tea before hers. It is a sign of his vow never to marry again, you see? Her name all in gold—his with one character in red, which shows that he is still living. The red character shows that he is still living. . . . So."

The American stared, quite motionless.

"Where," he asked, finally, "is your man who has left all his old gods behind him?"

The Japanese, after a moment, smiled slowly.

"At least," he said, "it is the last—er—link. And look! Dust in the tea-cup! When do you think it was filled last? It is here, surely. But it is my conviction that the last link is very weak."

"If it is, more's the pity."

The little man snapped the *butsudan's* latch shut, and held the door hangings open.

"We are hardly polite," he said, drily; "we rather pry into Tamamura's affairs, do we not? Let us find his cigarettes; mine are gone. Listen. I believe he is coming—"

The hall door opened, and the owner of the rooms came in.

"Gentlemen, I am sorry to have kept you waiting—"

He was very small, very ugly, sparse-mustached, and irreproachable from top-hat to boots. Of the three types of Japanese face, his was the Uralian—the Asiatic—eyes oblique, face long, nose somewhat high.

He laid down his hat and gloves, and acknowledged the American's introduction by a passive handclasp. When he spoke, it was as though from behind a finely modeled mask.

"You write things? I see them sometimes. But not a newspaper man? Then I shall tell you something, Kobayashi. I am to be married."

He lighted a cigarette, and smiled a dry, mirthless, *de rigueur*, little smile. His fellow-countryman uttered a surprised, banal congratulation, and the

American murmured politely and unintelligibly. These two, who had just stood before the *butsudan* in the inner room, let their eyes meet for a moment, and then looked guilelessly at their host. He waved them to chairs, and rang for bottles and glasses.

"I am to be married," he said, after a pause, "to Miss Cheiratton. Miss Cheiratton's father is the tea Cheiratton, as you know, Kobayashi. I consider it a very desirable alliance, as does he. She is an estimable young woman, and, in spite of my obvious shortcomings, she considers it so, too."

"When?" asked Kobayashi.

"When arranged? Only to-night. Or when accomplished? The sooner, the better. It will mean a combination of interests, as you can imagine. So romance slips into business—ha! ha! Scotch, Mr.—er? This is quite absurd, parading my uninteresting affairs before you. But Kobayashi is perhaps my oldest friend in this country. Now we shall talk of something else. Do you like old Ovids and such things? I have a very fine one here, that I picked up a few days ago—"

Under the stars, the American looked at the Japanese quizzically.

"I am glad to have met him," he said. "As you say, saving name and body, he is as Western as you. A marriage of commercial convenience, eh? To an American girl. An American girl—h'm. And, by Jove! he looks at it as he would at a tea deal—"

He drew on his gloves, slowly.

"I am glad to have seen the *butsudan*, too," he said.

Kobayashi looked at him for a moment, and smiled satirically in the starlight.

"Ah—the little, dusty *butsudan*," he said. "Good night."

II

THE American was coming into his study next morning, when Kobay-

ashi's card was brought to him. The Japanese followed it—a little, somber, correct figure behind the big servant.

He sat down in silence and began to smoke mechanically, his yellow face less in repose, more readable than usual. His expression was of vague, ill-suppressed excitement.

Finally, "Tamamura has gone off," he said.

"What do you mean?"

The Japanese waved his slim fingers lightly about his forehead.

"His mental poise is—er—suddenly disturbed somehow. All since last night. Liver—or something, I don't know. He came to me this morning and told me very strange things. He is not at all himself. I don't know how, just how, I should go about telling you. If you were a Japanese, if you had been raised in the superstitions of my country, it would be easy—told in ten words. But you would like to hear?"

"Certainly."

"Well—" Kobayashi smoked in silence for a minute and then said:

"This is the story as he told it to me. I believe I should tell some one, in case he becomes—er—seriously ill. Of course, you will understand that it is all in his brain? He has had a hallucination, that is all. A Japanese, who did not know, who had not got beyond such things, would go to a priest—a Buddhist—and buy a charm. Ha! ha! I sent him to a nerve specialist, and told him to talk very little.

"This is the whole matter. Last night, when we left him, he sat and smoked—a great deal of tobacco is not the best thing for nerves, you know—and considered this—er—Cheiratton alliance. Finally, he got up, turned down the lights, and went to the bedroom door, to go to bed. When he opened the door, he says, a breeze blew on him from the darkness within.

"Now, notice. It was fresh, warm, Spring air, with a smell and—er—texture to it that struck some strings of his heart and set them vibrating,

in a way that he had not known for many years. He felt like a young man, not in his body, you know—in his emotions, old, familiar emotions—emotions that he had not felt for a long time. So this strange breeze blew out from the black bedroom.

"He went in, and the door came shut after him, noiselessly. He could not find the knob to open it again. There was a strange feeling about a familiar room, as when one gets up in the night and loses his sense of location. He stumbled forward, and the warm breeze, with the scent of flowers in it, blew gently about him. Before him there was one wall that seemed slightly luminous. He could not place the furniture, but he struck none of it, and that bedroom is a small room. And he felt, all at once, that this room he had stepped into was not his own room at all!

"Then he heard something stirring somewhere, and a sound like a woman crying softly. He stood still, shaking—and he should be a brave man, too, as his father was. And then he threw himself forward, toward the luminous wall, and crashed against it—and—

"It was a paper wall—*shoji*—a Japanese wall! His hands went through it, and where his hands went through, moonlight came in and the breeze, this warm breeze, full of the perfume of plum-blossoms. He could hear the plum-trees rustling outside. He could see them there, through the broken *shoji*, dull white against a strange, open, indigo landscape!

"Then he turned, and he could see the room dimly. It was empty—only pale mats, an alcove, a dim-painted wall of sliding screens opposite—the room of his house in Kyoto, years ago! As he looked, the wall of sliding screens opposite began to move. A panel slid slowly open. There were two women in the opening, on their knees—Japanese women—white faces and dark, dark kimonos, their hair hanging about their thin cheeks. They stared at him with great eyes, shining

in the gloom, in this Kyoto room that had been his New York room an hour before. And all the while he heard the plum-blossoms rustling outside the broken *shoji*, and saw tears running down these women's cheeks from their great eyes. Then these two, in thin, far-off voices, said: 'She is dead.'

"That is all . . . 'She is dead' . . . And he fell down—fainted. That is, this morning his man found him lying in front of the *butsudan*."

Kobayashi looked frowningly at his dead cigarette for a time. The American did not stir.

"Now," said the Japanese, finally, "it was just such a night, years ago, in Kyoto, that his wife died, so he says. And then, too, he staggered in the dark against the *shoji* of his house and broke them, and the breeze blew in so. And, at that moment, the wall of the next room was pushed open, and the two women of his house knelt there in the opening, just so, and said, 'She is dead.'"

"He says that the horror of it last night was that it was so real. It was not intangible, misty, like an illusion—it was all material to him. He felt the *shoji*, and smelled the breeze, and it was as actual, as familiar as though something had picked him up at the bedroom door and hurled him back, years and years, to that night. There they knelt, those two, with the tears running down their white cheeks. And he says that he felt that the dead woman was behind the screens, lying on her quilts, white and straight—"

The Japanese concealed a shiver with a shrug.

"It was easy to see that something was very wrong with him this morning. When I say he was not himself, I mean more than the words. He had strange, flighty ideas—superstitions half-formed, half-remembered, dug out of his brain from the time when he was—was old Japanese. He seemed to be losing all the—all the mental progression that he had got himself, through these sane, modern years of his. He was very much shaken up, you see.

"But I reasoned with him, and—er—bullied and scorched him into comparative reason. Great heavens! he was quoting a Buddhist text to me at one time! You know our literature—and every twentieth story of a dead wife, forgotten, and what follows—in that literature. I opened the window of my room, and let in the rattle of elevated trains and the din of factory whistles, and wore down his thoughts, little by little, with such things, and talk to match. I talked of bromides and a nerve doctor, until I had him—er—around. And I have made him promise—and this is the measure of the success—and I have made him promise to go back there, and take these wretched, mortuary tablets from that *butsudan* in broad daylight, and—by Jove!—throw them in the river!"

"Good God!" muttered the American. "They are—"

"I know," said the Japanese, his keen little face sharpening, "I know what they are—no, what they were. They are nothing to-day. They can mean nothing to him after what he told us last night. They are potent in nothing material. And understand, I did not get him to throw them away through a thread—a mote of superstition. Thank heaven, my nerves are all right. It is because of their possible effect on him. They are ghosts enough themselves—of things that should reasonably be stone dead to him. They are better done with. Why has he kept them—why has he hung on to that last, futile link? Bah!"

The American sat looking long at the smoke curl from the cigarette.

"He will marry Miss—"

"Tch! Why not? why not? Shall I let my friend be terrorized by his worn-out nerves? And last night I called him progressive, and to-day, on my life, I think that down in his heart he would have given a very great deal to see a Buddhist priest! But he was all apart, that was it. The racial instinct, you know, that we cannot eradicate—it shoulders up when the brain is chaotic. Well—"

"And he will go back there to-night?"

"Why not? The tablets in the river—the last link hurled away—let him face his leather chairs and genre pictures. What is there in them to harm him? He must go to meet his malady and fight it. He must beat it down."

"Yes," said the American, "if that is what it is——"

III

EARLIER next morning than before the Japanese called again. Entering, he waggled a note in a nervous, yellow hand, from the doorway. He sank down deep in a big chair, looking with an expression half confused, half uneasy, from the note to the silent American and back. At length:

"Well—you must forgive me for haunting you this way—he has done it."

"Which?" asked the other, motionless.

"Listen. This note came by messenger last night. I will read you a bit."

"H'm. 'Proved own satisfaction mental derangement, overwork'—not that. Here it is:

"To take out the root, as you say. Just back from doing that. To-night—the sun was hardly set—I wrapped up both the *ihai* with a paper-weight, and took them on a ferry-boat and dropped them into the river. They sank at once. They are gone. Already I think I am quite myself again."

The Japanese looked up slowly, with a puckered frown. "Quite himself. And I will bet you that when he wrote that he did not know he wrote, for the first time in years—so."

He spread the letter face up. It was not English, but a scribble of grass writing—hurried, straggling, Japanese script.

"I am not easy," he said, jumping up and walking over to the American. "You and I—I seem to have dragged you into this, don't I? I am going to his rooms now—right now—and I hope you will come with me."

"Of course, at once."

They went down and climbed silently into a cab at the curb. When they were on their way, the American turned

and put a big hand on his companion's little arm.

"What are you afraid of?" he asked.

The Japanese shrugged his lean shoulders, and his high cheeks were patched dimly with color.

"I can't tell you," he said, almost sullenly; "I am foolish. I shall find him eating a grape-fruit and reading the market, I know. It was gray dawn when I woke up, and things looked differently then. In this sunlight, you see—I am foolish, and yet, I feel that I want to go there and see for myself."

"You have been recalling those stories? Of the dead vines?"

"Bah! Ghost tales are all very well in their place, you know. In those tales, anyway, things always happen to the second woman. Oh, invariably. In this case—the old fellows who fathered Japanese literature didn't have much experience with foreign women, you see. I don't know just what they'd do in a case like that—it's a little beyond their pale."

It's very impertinent to dress a man's liver trouble up as a ghost story, isn't it? Ghost stories don't go with hansoms and asphalt pavements and fresh sunlight, do they?"

The cab rattled along; the two men sat silent and stiff for a time. Finally the American leaned back.

"So he drowned the *ihai*," said he, "the little wife's *ihai* he had saved from the wreck? Wrapped up with a paper-weight; from a ferry-boat . . . And the other—his own, too, eh? The dead *ihai* and the living he drowned . . ."

"If you please, not," said the Japanese, querulously. "You speak as though he had drowned himself."

They rode on in silence.

Finally, they came to the apartment-house where Tamamura lived. Clean sunlight flooded the vestibule; the hall within was bright with many-colored splashes of light, streaming through stained glass. There was small room for ominous anticipation in this cheery radiance. But as the door of Tama-

mura's little hall opened to their ring, both men paused involuntarily before entering, struck with the contrast of the atmosphere within to the atmosphere without—the vague, indefinite, depressing atmosphere that they had noticed on that night before.

Behind the somber English servant standing there the door of Tamamura's library was ajar. Within was dimness, through which the white shape of the Henner on the wall glimmered faintly, almost like a cold, white figure hovering there, naked, in the dusk.

With a muttered apology, the servant followed them in and opened a shutter.

"Mr. Tamamura?" said the Japanese, darting a glance at the closed bedroom door.

"I have not waked him, sir."

"Wake him," said the Japanese, shortly, with a quick, involuntary gesture. As he stood in the narrow path of light from the open shutter, an expression half of deprecated shame struggled with another expression on his yellow face. The American stood silent, his face a white spot in the gloom by the dead fireplace.

As the servant went across the floor, the Japanese turned with a twist of his mouth to his companion.

"This is all ridiculous," he whispered, with a wry smile. "Now that we are here, I can adjust myself to the absurdity of it. I have no excuse to give him; I cannot tell him what made me come, for I cannot tell myself that. I think I need a nerve specialist myself. What is that?"

"Gentlemen"—the servant stood with his back toward the bedroom door—"gentlemen, the door is locked. Mr. Tamamura never locks it. I have knocked. He does not answer."

The American strode to the door. He knocked once, twice, three times. He called. The Japanese, too, beside him, called the name of the man within, with a string of words in his own tongue, that came crowding to his mouth now, involuntarily. The sibilant, crackling phrases sounded loud

and nerve-jarring in the quiet, gloomy room.

No answer.

"Stand out of the way," said the American, sharply.

The locked door splintered under his shoulder, swayed, fell inward into the square darkness with a crash. The three men stepped back, with one movement, from what they could not see.

And from within, a cool, damp, sweetish smell, as of blossoms, and the air of another place, drifted out and about them.

It was dark inside; apparently every window was muffled. In the faint light that trickled from the open shutter across the library, the little *butsudan* within glimmered. It was very still in there.

The Japanese drew back, clasping his hands to keep them from twitching. The American, with elbows crooked, white hands, half-curved, reaching forward, looked in for a moment, and then, squaring his shoulders, stepped suddenly into the dark little room.

The Japanese's mouth was open. He leaned forward. From between his lips came, all unconsciously, old, old words of prayer.

"*Namu Amida Butsu . . . Namu Amida Butsu . . .*"

A match glimmered inside, low down near the floor. Its red flicker lighted, for a second, something lying there. As it went out, the American appeared in the doorway, his face white, his forehead glistening.

"He is dead," he said, in a small, choked voice.

He faltered, glanced over his shoulder, and swallowed. "He is dead," he said, "and that is not all. His clothes are dripping with salt water. His face is the face of a drowned man. Here, in this house, my God! is a man lying dead from drowning in salt water!"

He stood there staring and staring at the others, and there was the horror of dreadful things set on the three faces in the gloomy room. Then his

eyes widened, he turned, and went in again.

They heard him rattling in the darkness with the *butsudan*.

He came out again. The two shrank back from him. In each hand, stretched forth quivering, he held an *ihai*—a mortuary tablet—the mortuary tablets that the dead man, the night before, had thrown into the river. With a convulsive gesture he hurled them from him to the floor.

"Look at them," he cried, hoarsely, stark fear in his voice, "they were in the *butsudan*. Look at them! They are soaked with salt water, the *butsudan* is dripping with salt water!"

The Japanese, half crouching, with

staring eyes, drew back, step by step, lifting his feet. "*Namu Amida Butsu*," he whispered.

Suddenly, he stopped. He pointed to the floor.

"The *ihai*! The *ihai* of Tamamura! Do you see? Do you see? The ideograph!"

The *ihai* of Tamamura lay face up on the floor. On its smooth surface a red ideograph had always blazed—the sign of life. It was gone. In its place, shining in the gloom, was a gold ideograph of the dead.

They were both the same now—the tablet of the man, newly dead, and the tablet of the long-dead wife.



LA CRUCHE CASSÉE

TWO things there are that make the whole world bright,
That down to our poor earth draw heaven divine,
That up to their pure heaven lift earth, that shine
In joy and woe alike with quenchless light,
And make all wrong less wrong, all right more right:
The child and mother—in each face the sign
Of God's soft seal is fresh; His love benign
Laughs in their hearts all day, broods there all night.

O little maid, thou interblended gleam
Of child that was, of woman yet to be,
Which sweetest is we know not of the three—
The hope, the memory, or the painted dream.
Thou only, Art, canst changeless keep the mild,
Faint evanescence of the woman-child.

G. M. G.



NATURAL SEQUENCE

CRAWFORD—How was it you changed your mind about staying in town all Summer?

CRABSHAW—My wife changed hers about going away.

"ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL"

By Dorothy Canfield

IT was in a shady nook on "Flirtation," where the rocks sloped directly from their feet to the Hudson. With a reckless disregard of regulations, the cadet had unfastened the top hook of his collar and, with his hands clasped behind his head, was gazing meditatively at the girl who was opening a box of candy. It looked like the regulation arrangement on "Flirtation," but it was not. The girl was from New Hampshire, and had a sense of humor.

Besides, she was evidently expectant. She arranged her skirts comfortably, tilted her parasol at an angle which shaded the cadet's head as well as her own, and then said, "Now, Allan, you promised you'd tell me all about it. There's no reason for putting it off."

The cadet rubbed his close-cropped head thoughtfully. "I'll tell it on one condition—that you don't interrupt. I don't believe you can help it, but I warn you now, that if you break in a single time I won't finish the story."

The girl laid the candy-box on one side, crossed her heart, and, raising eyes to the Spring-blue sky, chanted solemnly:

"Honest and true, honest and true,
Lay me down and cut me in two!"

The cadet laughed, and then grew serious. "You're not in the proper frame of mind. This is the story of my engagement I'm going to tell you. It's no funny business—being engaged to be married! Makes a fellow do some thinking."

"Well, if I were the girl, I must say I'd enjoy having you take such a funereal view of it!"

"That," said the cadet, as he reached for the candy-box, "is the last speech I won't count as an interruption."

"I'm going to start in by saying that you don't know the girl, but that she's a wonder! It all happened about a year and a half ago—when she'd been coming up to the Point for several months, to hops and things. She was the gayest little 'fem' you ever saw—always cracking jokes and laughing like a chime of bells."

"You know our set of six fellows, and how we always hang together. Well, we were together on this proposition all right! We thought she was about the funniest little girl that ever came along. She was always saying something you didn't think she was going to. I remember she was the only girl I ever saw who had something new to say when we told her we called our room-mates our 'wives.' And I tell you no 'spoonoid' had any chance around her. She's got the prettiest eyes, that look as though they'd be just great for looking soft, but she kept them snapping so with fun that there wasn't any use trying to do the spoon."

"Well, a year ago last Fall, when I was a second-class man, I was sitting in my room one evening, boning on math. I'd been working like a horse trying to 'max' my calculus, and I was as grouchy as a bear. My 'wife' was not any company, for he'd been 'doing area' ever since two o'clock, and had turned in so dead tired you couldn't have waked him with an ax. I was getting lonelier and lonelier, and feeling more and more as though I wanted a blow-out of some kind to

put some life into me, when there was a whoop at the door and the five fellows of the gang came in, all talking at once. Puddenhead had a letter, waving it in the air, and the only thing I could get out of them was that Helen was engaged. I had two Helens on the string about that time, and I was considerably excited till after about five minutes they got smoothed down enough for me to make out that they meant this girl I'm telling about. I hadn't thought of her at all. She wasn't the kind you'd ever think of as sobering down enough to get engaged. Puddenhead had had a letter from a girl in Bridgeport, where Helen lived, and she said Helen's engagement to a 'cit' named Beardsley was just announced. Well, we were great pals of Helen's, and we were sore that she hadn't told us anything about it. Puddenhead said, 'Think of her nerve! She's coming up to a hop to-morrow night just as though nothing had happened. She thinks she's going to fool us. We'll just let her know that she can't get ahead of us with her practical jokes. Let's meet her as the 'bus comes up to the top of the hill and shout out "congratulations!" till they can hear us on the other side of Parade Ground.'

"I was just going to say I was game for that, when 'Big' Marshall began jumping up and down and hollering, 'I got you beat! I got you beat! I got an idea that beats that all to frazzles! Let's all six of us never let on we've heard a thing, and then all propose to her, heavy-tragedy style, during the hop—take on as though we were broken-hearted, and then have the laugh on her the next day.'

"Say, that struck us all right, all right! We just went into the air. I could just see Helen's funny eyes crinkling up into her jolly laugh when we told her the next day. We laughed so, fixing up our different proposals, that we almost went into fits, and I was so tickled when I went to bed, I just lay there and shook. To think we could turn the joke on Helen that way!

"We could hardly wait for the hop,

and when my dance with Helen came I proposed to sit it out on the balcony overlooking the Hudson, and I fairly shivered for fear she'd want to dance; but she didn't, and we went down the stairs together, me beginning to put on the proper solemn air.

"It was moonlight—a warm October evening. The Hudson looked like a black diamond with rubies all around it where the lights of the shore gleamed. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and just the sweetest Autumn smell in the air. Oh, it was the proper stage-setting, all right! I lifted Helen up to the broad balustrade—same way I had lots of times before—and then I turned and gazed down the river, trying to look romantic. There never was a Doanes from Alabama who couldn't look romantic, when he put his mind to it, and I reckon I came up to the family standard. Helen was looking some romantic herself—staring down at her hands in her lap. I tell you, she looked pretty—any girl would, out there in the moonlight—but she looked like a regular little fairy.

"Well, I drew a long breath and started in. 'Helen,' I said, in a deep voice—I had to speak very low because there were lots of other people sitting out dances all around us—'Helen!' Then I went down about an octave, 'dear!' I thought right there was where the fun would start, but Helen never stirred—just sat and looked down at her hands in her lap.

"That made me mad, 'cause I was sure she was thinking so about that 'cit' Beardsley that she didn't even hear me. So I took on a load of Alabama fireworks, and whirled in in good earnest. Say, I won't tell you what I said to her, but you can just bet it was red-hot! I was going to give her her money's worth. I told her she was the only one in the world for me—that I had my future all fixed up with her in the midst of it, and it would be the death of me to unfix my ideas, that I would quit the service if there wasn't any hope for me—oh, you just imagine what an Alabama Doanes would do, turned loose with his imagi-

nation and without any fear of consequences, and you'll have *me!*

"Helen never said a thing—she couldn't, I was executing such a rapid-fire effect in my delivery—and when I lowered down my voice to nothing at all and said in a breath, 'Helen! Helen! Helen!' getting in an extra thrill every time, she just gave a little shiver, and that was all.

"By-and-bye I got through—even a Doanes from Alabama, can't keep it up forever!—and, besides, our dance was not going to last for all time, and I wanted to give the other fellows a chance. There was a long silence, and then Helen raised her head and looked at me.

"Say, it was a good thing I was leaning up against the balustrade, 'cause if it hadn't been for that I'd have fallen right down in a fit. The hills on the other side of the Hudson began to waver up and down, and in a minute they sprang right up and hit me on the head. Helen was looking at me with eyes like stars, and they changed every minute and got softer and softer till I was just melted and floated away in 'em. You wouldn't think she ever could have laughed out of them, they were so sweet and solemn. Her lips moved, and I could just hear her say, 'Allan, my Allan!'

"Then she did the prettiest thing I ever saw a girl do. There were a lot of 'spoonoids' sitting around, and we couldn't either of us do anything without their seeing us. She just brushed her lips with the tips of her fingers and then dropped her hand down on mine as it lay on the balustrade. It was the sweetest thing—but honest, it's no joke, I felt an electric shock that made me see stars. I was about the most startled and scared individual you ever saw, and what with that and my general feeling of goneness, I know I must have turned pale. She leaned over toward me and said, in the prettiest, lowest voice, that just went through me like a knife, 'Why, Allan, you must have known how I felt!'

"I gasped out something about her always jollyng so a fellow couldn't

know *what* she felt, and she said, reproachfully, 'Oh, dear boy, that was only to shelter myself. I was so afraid you would know and despise me.'

"I took another brace, and murmured some disjointed questions about the 'cit' Beardsley, but she caught me up short. 'You didn't believe that gossip! How little you can have known how—why, Allan, dear, sometimes when the slow old 'bus has been crawling up the hill from the station I've been fairly faint to think I should see you so soon. Do you remember that shoe-string you broke off, one afternoon, down on "Flirtation"? Now, listen, I'm going to tell you how foolish I am. I went back the next day and picked it up, and I've always kept it—think! all I've ever had of yours!' *Poor Helen!*

"I was just dissolving in thin air all this time—I was, for a fact! I couldn't feel the ground under my feet, and I had to hold on to the balustrade, hard, I was so light-headed and dizzy. Just then 'Big' Marshall came running out to get Helen for the next dance. I helped her down, and she gave my arm a little hidden pat, that couldn't have hurt worse if she'd hit me with a hammer! I watched her walk away with 'Big,' feeling meaner and meaner, till, as she turned and gave one backward look toward me, I just shriveled up to nothing at all. I moved around the corner to a place where I knew nobody'd come, and fell down on a chair, and took my head in my hands and did some tall thinking! First off, I took about an hour calling myself bad names. I'd think of the light in her eyes as she had looked at me, and curse myself for about the lowest, meanest specimen of humanity that ever drew breath. Then I lost my head for a while, I was so wild at the thought of what it meant to *me!* There I was—I wouldn't even be out of the Academy for two years, with fourteen years after that to wait for a captaincy—at least fourteen—and already engaged! I thought of excuses I could make—couldn't I tell her we had insanity in the family, or that I was

already engaged, or that—then I'd think of her voice as she had said, 'Allan, my Allan!' and feel too low-down to live, for having the heart to think of anything but how to make it up to her for the beastly thing I'd done. But you know me—I'm the kind, who, the minute he's tied to anything, *anything*, is wild to get loose—*me* engaged to be married, before I was even a second lieutenant! Then I'd think of Helen again, sweet, jolly little Helen, with all the fun gone out of her eyes and just the lovelight in them, and I'd brace up for a minute—only the next I'd think of always and always living up to what she thought I meant and never for a minute letting her know, 'cause an Alabama Doanes couldn't do less, and then I'd feel suffocated and as though I couldn't—I just *couldn't*! I groaned, out there by myself, as though I were going to die, and I felt as though I were—I wished I could!

"I was all in a tremble when I stood up finally, but my mind was made up. I was a Doanes from Alabama, and I wasn't going to go back on the woman who loved me—if it killed me! So I marched up the stairs to the hop, and found 'Army Blue' just being played, and in a minute the drums sounded and everybody was rushing around to get his girl home and himself back to barracks before taps. I tried to see Helen, but she was going home in the 'bus, and I only had a chance to say good night. All the other fellows were there, and all of a sudden I remembered about them! How could I ever explain to them so that they wouldn't know what had happened? They, of course, must have gone right on with the programme and had no idea it was not Beardsley she'd refused them for, but me! They went up and said 'Good night,' kind of melancholy, still carrying out their parts, and then we all stood together after the 'bus drove off. Helen was sitting on the end, and what do you think she did? Right there before all those fellows, she leaned out of the open door and blew a kiss to me! Say, that finished me all right.

When I came to, I found the other fellows had gone on, and I walked over to barracks alone, making resolutions every step I took. If a proud, sensitive girl like Helen goes so far as to show her feelings like that, there is only one thing for a gentleman and a cadet to do, and that is to come up to the scratch.

"That's what I kept saying over all night. I tell you, I didn't sleep much, and I didn't need reveille to wake me up in the morning. I was planning what I would say to Helen when I saw her the next afternoon. The first time I saw her would be the worst. After chapel, though, her aunt—her aunt is Captain Wadleigh's wife—told me that Helen had been telegraphed for to come to New York to see an uncle off on the steamer, and that she had left on the first train. Say, maybe I didn't feel like a reprieved prisoner! I caught the first long breath I'd had since the night before. But in a minute I knew I'd have to write; and that's what I did! All that afternoon I wrote and tore up and wrote and tore up, trying to fix just the letter she ought to get. I tried to think what I'd want a fellow to write if I were a girl just engaged to him, and then I'd write it. I threw in some, for good measure, but every time I read it over I was sure that wasn't the way a Doanes from Alabama would do it, and I'd tear it up and start all over again. Once I caught myself thinking what a shame it was to spend a whole precious Sunday afternoon doing that—and then I laid down the pen, and just groaned and groaned! For it came over me like a crack of thunder that it wasn't only *that* Sunday afternoon, but every single one for always and always that I couldn't have to myself. But I gritted my teeth, and thought of Helen's face as she leaned out of the door of the 'bus, all soft and quivery with joy, and I went on writing.

"I got some sort of a letter done, and was just starting out to post it, when Captain Wadleigh's orderly came up and said that Miss Helen had left a note for me and wished me to go over

to the house and get it. I started over there and posted the letter on the way. When I got to the gate I saw Puddenhead and 'Big' going up the walk, and two of the other fellows were looking out of the windows. I thought, 'Oh, Lord! Helen's probably left a note for all of them announcing our engagement. I won't have to put up a bluff or anything!'

"Mrs. Wadleigh was sitting inside talking to the fellows already there, and in a minute in came Adams, and there we were, all six. Mrs. Wadleigh got up and went over to her desk. 'You boys and Helen are such jokers!' she said. 'I don't know what the joke is this time, but I suppose it is some of Helen's nonsense. She asked me to give you all one of these.' With that she began handing around some little notes. I knew what it meant all right, and I waited a minute before I opened mine, for I didn't feel as though I had any right to read what Helen had written there. When I broke the seal an engraved card fell out and, as I looked at it, I got the shock of my life.

"Mr. and Mrs. — request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter Helen to Eugene Beardsley—"

"My heart turned over five times in rapid succession, and I had a goneness that would have made an elephant feel weak. When I came to, there were all the other fellows sitting there as though somebody had knocked 'em on the head with a club. I heard myself saying, feebly, 'But she kissed her hand to me . . . ' when all the others

came out of their trance to say, 'Why, that was for me!' 'For me!' 'For me!'

"Just then we heard a funny noise, and there was that 'wife' of mine back of us, just gasping for breath, and so full of laughter he was black in the face. As we turned around and looked at him kind of dazed and fish-eyed, he was so tickled he gave a whoop, and fell on the floor in a fit. That blamed scalawag hadn't been asleep at all that night, and he had gone and told Helen all about our scheme; and say, what do you think? The little actress, she'd accepted the whole six of us the same way she had me!"

At this point the girl from New Hampshire, who had been listening seriously, broke into a shout of delight and laughed till the tears rolled down her cheeks. She checked herself for an instant to ejaculate: "Talk about poetic justice!" and then went off into another peal. Finally, still shaking with mirth, her handkerchief at her eyes, she inquired: "What happened to your 'wife'?"

The cadet helped himself to a large chocolate-drop. "It was the funniest thing about him! We were all so sort o' weak and shaken by our scare and the sudden relief, that we never thought to take it out on him! Blessed if he didn't get off scot-free! But the next time Helen came to the Point"—here there was a pause as he thoughtfully finished the chocolate-drop—"well, on the whole, I reckon I'd better not tell you about the next time Helen came to the Point!"



AFTERMATH

MADGE—I made quite an impression at the reception, didn't I? Everybody seemed to be talking about me.

MARJORIE—They talked about you more after you left.

A MOWING SONG

SWING and sway in rhythmic measure,
 Kings might envy us our pleasure,
 Mowing is but play;
 Far the golden grain is sweeping,
 Slowly to the west is creeping
 The rich-freighted day;
 Then swing and sway.

Swing and sway, no stroke abating,
 Other harvest-fields are waiting,
 Onward! do not stay;
 Joyous blood each vein is filling,
 Action every nerve is thrilling,
 Labor is but play;
 Then swing and sway.

Swing and sway—beneath our scything
 Like a foe the grain is writhing—
 Conquer while we may!
 Hour by hour the shadows lengthen,
 Every muscle now must strengthen,
 Swiftly flies the day;
 Then swing and sway.

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH WELLS.



AN EYE TO BUSINESS

BRIGGS—I saw the name of that clairvoyant in the papers, and consulted her.
 GRIGGS—Was she very good?
 "She was a good advertising medium."



ONE BETTER

FIRST BOY—We've got a new attachment on our piano.
 SECOND BOY—That's nothing! We've got one on our house.

THE SUICIDE

By Agnes Russell Weekes

A LONG the dark corridor, lighted by electric lights, Aubourg swung at a rapid pace, walking with the lazily graceful, catlike tread which marked a strain of Italian blood in him, and carrying in his hand the packet which he had just gone out to purchase. Closed doors on either side kept their secrets; the mysterious teeming life of a great hotel moved invisible around him, but Aubourg evidently saw nothing of it. His dark, fine, Norman features had the look of preoccupied and half-melancholy recklessness which is found in the old portraits of dead and gone cavaliers.

Gaining the end of the corridor and opening the last door on the right, he was surprised to find his room in darkness. He tried to find his way to the mantelpiece, but he had not taken three steps when he blundered against a chair; then, turning quickly to avoid it, he struck against the table, and a crash of splintered glass told him that he had knocked off some small article which his memory refused to identify. With a muttered exclamation of impatience, Aubourg retraced his steps to the door, and switched on the electric light. Its cold, dazzling stare revealed a large, shabby room, an iron bedstead with a threadbare blue canopy, and a cheap and scanty set of furniture. A leather portmanteau, marked with the initials "C. H.," stood beside the washstand; and on a circular table in the middle of the room stood an empty bottle of Bass's, a clay pipe, and a tobacco pouch, flanked by a litter of foreign newspapers and railway guides and Eng-

lish books and magazines. On the floor lay the fragments of a broken tumbler. Nothing could have made a sharper contrast with the luxurious trimness of Aubourg's own apartment. It was like a glimpse of another man's private life, and Aubourg, who was sick of his own, felt the attraction of this bohemian interior, thus caught at unawares and bare to his curiosity.

"At all events, I must pick up his tumbler for him," he thought, moving toward the table, "and I owe him an apology for breaking it. I suppose I've come up a story too high."

He picked up the fragments carefully, and stood looking down at the table. A letter lay on its oilcloth cover, addressed in a woman's hand to "Cecil Hurst, Esq., Hôtel Russe, Bruxelles, Belgique." Aubourg fingered it doubtfully, but laid it down again. After all, not even the white packet that he carried in his hand could release him from that elementary obligation. He did not scruple, however, to take up the book that lay face downward by the letter, and glance through the first lines that caught his eye.

"But now the King of Terrors comes, overshadowing flesh and spirit with the vague, with the illimitable darkness of His wings: and while His power is upon us, the power and the fashion of this world are changed. Who fears Death instant, has no room to fear pain, or night, or judgment, or the phantasmagoria of an imaginary hell, which pass away and are absolved by His omnipotent and annihilating stroke. . . ."

"Just tell me what you're doing here, will you?" said a level and

commonplace voice from the threshold. "My name's Cecil Hurst, and this room's mine. If you've stolen anything, you'd better put it back quick—*sabe?*"

Aubourg put down the book and turned round. Light-blue eyes regarded his quizzically out of a broad, fair, ugly face; the broad, calm figure, clad in a ready-made suit and a flannel shirt, gave a remarkable impression of elasticity. Watchful and smiling, he stood with a hand in his hip-pocket, his body bent forward, ready to spring; Aubourg set him down at once for a good boxer and fencer, light of his feet and light of his hands, and, probably, also ready with his revolver.

"Don't fire," he said, laughing. "I came blundering in here in the dark by mistake for my own room, and—I have to apologize." He indicated the neat little heap of fragments.

"I see," said Hurst, but with a doubtful inflection. He shut the door and came up to the table, to Aubourg's side. "I suppose you like De Quincey," he said.

"Do you mind? Of course, I fully recognize that I had no business to look at it," said Aubourg, laughing again, but embarrassed by the consciousness that he was being subjected to a narrow and critical examination. "I can only apologize for an unwilling intrusion." He turned to go, momentarily forgetting his packet, which was lying on the table. Hurst held it out to him.

"You've forgotten something," he said. "Ah!" His keen eye had caught sight of the label on the packet.

"Give that to me," said Aubourg, sharply.

"Wait a bit," said Hurst. "What are you doing with stuff marked '*Poison*,' Harry Aubourg?"

"It's a lie!" said Aubourg, furiously. "Give it here to me."

"I never lie. Don't you know your photograph's in all the papers? I knew you the minute I got inside the room."

Aubourg colored deeply. "I forgot that," he said. "Yes, I'm Harry Au-

bourg, who was broke for drunkenness on parade. All my people are in the Service, and I've got neither money, nor work—nor self-respect. Now, will you have the goodness to hand me over that packet?"

"Lord! you poor fool!" said Hurst, pityingly. He was evidently not shocked, and Aubourg was astonished to find what balm to his pride those words of simple comradeship conveyed.

"What on earth made you do it? You're not built for a sot."

"Hereditry."

"Ah! Seems a pity, doesn't it? And I know you want to chuck the whole concern. Well, this world's good enough for me; but tastes differ."

"And circumstances differ, also; it is too good for me."

"Suicide on the atonement theory? That's rather played out, you know."

Aubourg made for the door. "If you preach, I'm off," he said. "And if you won't give me back my own property I shall go straight to the nearest chemist and buy some more."

"And suppose I toddle after you and give you in charge before you get there?"

"I should do it all the same, sooner or later. You couldn't stop me; you would only make me appear rather ridiculous. No one can prevent a man from killing himself, if he's desperate and resolute, and carries a purse."

"So your mind's made up? I see. Don't go; I'm not a preacher; besides, I couldn't convert you if I were. You're too hard a case for me."

"How well you see my point of view!" said Aubourg, laughing outright as he dropped into an arm-chair.

"When I've smoked my cigar, I throw away the butt-end. Now, you say you've smoked your cigar, metaphorically speaking." Hurst waved his plump hand.

"Evidently, you're a philosopher of an unusually practical type."

"I? I'm a journalist, and I believe in letting folks manage their own business; besides, I guess I couldn't do any good, however hard I tried. Let's see how you mean to work the racket."

He stood in the centre of the room, holding up the packet between both hands so that the light fell on the printed slip of directions. Aubourg gazed up at him, feeling himself in the presence of a problem. He was not the first man, or woman, either, that had been provoked, and then baffled, by the calm, ugly, humorous face, the sleepy eyes, and the solid, yet wary, figure. Presently, Hurst turned to him, with a queer glance from under his downy eyebrows.

"You're booked for a stormy passage, my friend," he said. "Do you know anything about the properties of salts of baryta?"

Aubourg's high, excitable laugh rang out defiantly. "I do not want an ornamental suicide," he said. "They sha'n't call me a coward."

"They wouldn't, if they knew," said Hurst, drily. "You don't know any chemistry, I take it?"

"A captain in the First Hussars is not expected to know anything about anything."

"Don't sneer at your trade; it's an unhealthy sign. How are you going to take your dose?"

"I haven't the slightest idea! Won't it dissolve in water? That's what I thought of."

"Why don't you think of things beforehand? You cavalry chaps never have a grain of common sense in little jobs like this. You'd better let me mix it for you."

Aubourg's tense features relaxed into a grim smile. "You're pretty cool, I must say," he remarked. "Haven't you any conscience?"

"Seen too many good men die, sonny, to make a fuss about one bad one," Hurst answered, cheerfully.

He strolled across to the washstand, and poured a little water from the carafe into the tumbler. "Mind using this glass? You see, you went and smashed the other one." He rinsed it out carefully, Aubourg all the while watching him with fascinated interest. He felt that Hurst's entire lack of emotion robbed the situation of its dignity, and brought it down to a common-

place and rather vulgar level; he began to think of inquests, of post-mortem examinations, of sensational headlines in half-penny papers.

"You might just see that the door is locked," Hurst said, emptying away the rinsings. "We don't want to be caught by the chambermaid."

Aubourg locked it, then crossed the room and stood by Hurst's side. As much as a tablespoonful of white powder lay at the bottom of the thick, discolored glass. Then, while Hurst poured in the water, Aubourg watched it dissolve, till the tumbler was about half full of a thick, milky-looking fluid. With a lingering movement of mistrust, he looked about for the empty packet, unable to believe that Hurst was actually so criminally complaisant as he seemed. It lay beside the basin, empty.

"Be careful," Hurst said, quickly. "A few grains may be left, and I don't want them knocking about on my washstand, you know."

Aubourg laid the paper down, and went back to his chair. Hurst came and leaned against the mantelpiece, holding the tumbler. "Will you have it now, or sit and think about it for a bit?" he asked.

Aubourg stretched out his hand. "I'll take it now," he said, recklessly. He felt as though he were being pushed over a precipice; and, though his will assented, his body revolted against its fate in an agonized clinging to life which warned him that he must act at once or lose his nerve.

Hurst handed him the glass, not without a pitying glance. "Poor chap!" he said, under his breath. The unrelenting and yet kindly eyes rested on Aubourg's face as he lifted the glass to his lips.

And a moment later Aubourg set the glass down on the table. It was done. In a breath, in the twinkling of an eye, it was over; and life, with its endless chances and incalculable changes, with its shameful falls and glorious resurrections, was exchanged for death, certain, speedy and agonizing. Aubourg had not known, while

the thing was still to do, what it would be like to have done it. The thought, "*I have done what I and all the world cannot undo*," went over him in a creeping shiver of cold.

"Yes, you've done it," Hurst said, guessing and answering the thought. "You've vindicated your pluck—whether you couldn't have vindicated it in some more useful way, is a thing that don't matter much, now. I suppose you wouldn't like me to get a parson, would you?"

"What, to shrieve me? Thanks, I'll get along without that."

"One of the best fellows I ever knew was a sky-pilot," said Hurst, with a half-sigh. "He was a man that could talk straight. I believe, if I were dying by inches with my wits about me, I'd like a word with him. But he's dead now, God rest his soul! It's odd to think you may be seeing him to-night."

"Odd!" said Aubourg. "Yes." He shuddered suddenly from head to foot; his face was ghastly white. "I say, will it take long?" he said. "Do you know, Hurst, I think I'm beginning to feel rather queer."

"People generally are pretty queer before they die, you know."

"I suppose so," said Aubourg, laying his head back against the cushions of his chair, and staring in front of him with sickened eyes. "I don't mind the pain. It's the—the—unknown—the unknowable—the blank into which one goes out—I beg your pardon." He pulled himself together and sat up, but his hand trembled. "I am a fool and a cur. I'll die without bothering you, if I can."

"Don't worry yourself," said Hurst. "It isn't your dying that bothers me so much as what I shall do with your body when you're dead."

"Do with my body?"

"I don't want to figure as the notorious Brussels poisoner, you know. I'll have to drag you into the smoking-room, I expect; it's only just across the passage, and there's never anybody in it."

"Why the smoking-room?"

"Because I couldn't get you downstairs to your bedroom. For one thing you're heavy, and for another I might meet somebody. But I dare say I could get you across the passage and drop you on the sofa. I'm pretty strong. I expect I could get you up over my shoulder."

"Good God! how can you say such beastly things?" Aubourg cried, with another violent shudder.

"You think I'm revolting and loathsome? So's death."

"And am I really going to die? Oh, Hurst! the life is so strong in me, I can't believe it."

"The strongest man that ever lived, if he took that dose of baryta, would be dead in a couple of hours."

"Two hours of this agony!" Aubourg exclaimed. He got up and began to pace up and down the room. Hurst leaned against the chimney-piece and watched him, impassive and kindly, a beneficent, but inexplicable, force.

"I thought you wanted to die?" he said. "You were drunk on parade, you know."

"Yes, shamefully drunk—and it's in the blood! Only——"

"Pity you couldn't have found something to do, some way of patching up the mischief," said Hurst, reflectively. "You're pretty young, ain't you?"

"Thirty."

"Forty years more of this good and bad old world! Why, I've known a man cure himself that had been at it longer than you have, and his was a case of heredity, too. Never tell me! It's all a question of will power. I suppose you're not a religious man, by any chance? You don't happen to believe in a judgment to come?"

"Judgment!" exclaimed Aubourg, sharply. "No! If I did——"

"If you did, you feel as if you wouldn't funk dying—is that it? It's the possibility of no judgment, and no God, or heaven, or hell, or life at all after death—that's what you funk, I suppose?—what they call the doctrine of extinction of personality. It is rather a ghostly notion—gets hold of

you and makes you a bit sick and cold, especially when it comes up pretty close."

Aubourg, pacing the room, was more acutely conscious of physical existence than ever before. He drew each breath by a conscious effort, counted the beats of his heart, studied every infinitesimal sensation of his frame as through a microscope, to detect the first symptoms of disease and dissolution. Never had he so known his body, never had it been so dear to him; and never had the problem of the full-stop which death sets to mind and matter confronted him in a shape so close and appalling.

"I wish I were a Christian," he said, putting up his hand to his damp forehead. "I never thought before. How awful to go out! Hurst, do you think——?"

"That there's a God? Certainly. I know there is. I've seen His handiwork." Clear and strong and calm across the agony fell the voice of this peculiar evangelist, who connived at suicide and had seen death too often to be affected by it. "But He's a jealous God, Lord of Hosts. He's not the sort of God that puts up with skulking sentimentalism."

"I could take any punishment, except annihilation."

"Annihilation," I take it, is a big word for what I should call getting broke from God's army. Into the outer darkness, that's where you'll go in about an hour and a half from now—where you won't know, nor be, yourself."

Aubourg fell into a chair. "Don't—don't," he said, putting up his hand. "Give me a chance to die pluckily."

"Die pluckily! A suicide, and he talks of 'dying pluckily'! You don't know what pluck means. You're sick of life, and so you try to shuffle out of it the best way you can. Man, why didn't you get work to do? Disgraced, were you? Dishonored your name? Well, call yourself Smith, or Jones, or Robinson, and go and break stones by the roadside! It's God's roadside, and you enlisted in His army."

"Well, why did you tempt me then?" Aubourg gasped. "Why didn't you say all this before?"

"I did begin, and you tried to march out of the door. I couldn't save you when you wouldn't be saved."

"I beg your pardon; it was altogether my fault. But I was a fool. I didn't realize what death's like in cold blood and at close quarters."

"You *were* a fool, and no mistake. I'd have taken you with me to Morocco, where I'm off for to-morrow, to see the fun, and you could have fought the Arabs and the devil at the same time. How would you have liked that?"

"Taken me with you — me a stranger, and disgraced? I think you said you were a journalist. Are they all like this in your profession?"

"I may be rather unusually moral," said Hurst, with a grin, "but, anyhow, I'll bet I could have brought you home cured in six months' time. And it's wonderful how easy it is to start your life all over again when you're only thirty."

"I might have done it, if I could have held on to you," said Aubourg, simply. "But what's the good of talking? I've only an hour more."

"Ah! don't you wish you had those ten minutes over again? You're not the first suicide, depend upon it, that's seen things in two very different lights—before and after."

"Yes; I do wish it. I was a fool and a coward. But I'm not going to whimper about it, now it's done. Where's the empty packet?"

"On the table. What are you going to do?"

"I'm going down to my own room, to die by myself. If they see me on the bed, and the empty paper lying on the table, they'll guess at once how it happened, and no suspicion can fall on any one else. Besides, I may not be able to control myself—I'd rather die alone. Good-bye, and thanks."

He held out his hand. Hurst took it and held it with a singular, firm gentleness.

"The Lord be praised!" he said,

quietly. "You *have* got the right stuff in you. I knew I was right to do it."

"Do what?"

"You remember I sent you over to lock the door?"

"Yes," said Aubourg. "Why?"

"It was a fraud and a humbug,"

Hurst explained. "You've had half a tumblerful of precipitated chalk, that's all—stuff you clean your teeth with, don't you know?"

"*Precipitated chalk!*"

"Yes; I did it when your back was turned. First I tipped my tooth-powder into the glass, and then I emptied the salts of baryta into the tooth-powder pot— Hold on a bit, old man, you've had a stiff time of it. I'm so awfully sorry, but I couldn't think of any better way."

The room spun like a top before Aubourg's eyes. Hurst tightened his grip with one hand, and passed his free arm unobtrusively round Aubourg's shoulders.

"Look here, you'd better have something to eat," he said, with the grave smile that made his plain face beautiful; for he was above all things a practical evangelist, and knew when to take himself out of the way. "I'll go down and tell them to send us up a beefsteak and a cut of Roquefort cheese; I can't stand foreign kick-shaws, and so I've taught 'em to cook for me *à l'anglaise*. You just sit down and keep out of mischief, like a good little boy, and think how jolly it'll be when we get off to Morocco together!"



DEVOTION

AFTER SCHUMANN

THOUGH I were blind, thy face I still should see
 As last upon thine eyes the lovelight lay;
 If trembling lips were mute that fain would pray,
 Though I were dumb, my heart would speak to thee;
 If snow and flame should seem alike to me,
 Thy touch would wake its answer in my clay,
 Though bound in silence, I should hear thee say:
 "I love thee, Sweet, for all eternity."

Thou art the star within my world of night,
 Thou art the music I have longed to hear,
 Thou art my loving speech, that softly stole
 Upon my lips as dawn upon the sight;
 Thou art my tenderness—my roses, Dear—
 I am a woman, and thou art my soul.

MYRTLE REED.



A CAT may look at a king—but then a cat has nine lives.

CAPABLE MRS. CROLIUS

By Elizabeth Duer

I CLAIM for a short story the right of prelude. It is as pertinent to it as a spout to a teapot or a neck to a bottle, it makes it pour more easily; and so before recounting an exciting episode in the life of Mrs. Jacob P. Crolius, I pause to explain that at the time the story opens she was reaping a belated reward for earlier endurance.

She had married at twenty-five a man of seventy—married in order to gain a larger field for her executive intelligence, and the immediate outcome was to find herself tethered by her ring to a small round of domestic cares.

Her friends said she had married to settle; if so, all she accomplished was the marrying, while old Crolius did the settling. He settled down to a prolonged existence; he settled her activities by bestowing upon her the double function of valet and nurse to himself; he settled how he should spend his own money; and it was not till he had settled in his grave at eighty-two that she found her twelve years of service recompensed by the settling of his entire fortune upon her. If ever a woman deserved a reward for a mean action that woman was Ann Harriet Crolius.

The first effect of independence upon her character was a love of power and a desire to dazzle her friends by her administrative ability. She tolerated no masculine assistance. She attended to her own money affairs, she ran her two houses—one in town—one at Fastgo Park with the executive skill of a naval officer and a major-domo rolled into one. She decided quickly on any course of action, and she prided

herself upon being the exemplar of how immeasurably the capable woman transcends the average man.

So much for the prelude, now for the application.

The story opens at the Fastgo villa on the twenty-fourth of November, just as Mrs. Crolius was wearily going up-stairs to bed after a strenuous day spent in town.

The expedition had been forced upon her partly to prepare for a large house-party invited for Thanksgiving, and partly because she wished with her own hands to take her diamond crescent to Tiffany's to have the setting examined. She had fancied several of the stones insecure, and as they were extremely valuable she desired the opinion of an expert.

As it turned out, the ornament was in perfect order, and she might have saved herself the trouble, but it was something to be reassured, and it was with a feeling of satisfaction that she put the diamonds back in her bag at Tiffany's counter and turned her attention to the next item on her list. She shopped diligently till two o'clock, lunched at a fashionable restaurant, dropped in at her dressmaker's to be tempted with superfluous finery, and caught a late train home.

Behold her now mounting the airy staircase of her country house; a well-preserved woman in the prime of life, impressive—nay more, dignified; her features regular, though somewhat set, her hair dark and obstinately straight, her dress almost too elaborate for comfort.

Waiting for her, just inside her bedroom door, was Timkins, the lady's

maid. She was an English woman about fifty years old, with a turned-up nose, shrewd eyes and gray wavy hair screwed into a knot. Her trim figure rustled in black silk while the somberness was relieved by a jaunty muslin apron with pink bows. She advanced a step toward her mistress, holding out a white-velvet jewel-box ominously void.

"I suppose as you knows, mem, that your creshunt case is empty," she remarked.

"Surely not!" exclaimed Mrs. Crolius in dismay.

"As empty as the chrysalis from which the bird has flew!" said Timkins, who was more of a poet than a naturalist.

"Then," said Mrs. Crolius with decision, "it was taken out at Delgerry's. I thought the waiter was a long time in arranging my jacket and furs over the bag when I sat down to lunch."

"And in my opinion the wool on the unborn lamb ain't innercenter than that man," Timkins declared. "There's them in private houses whose ways needs lookin' after just as much as a poor fellow workin' to bring up his family in a public restaurant."

Mrs. Crolius was no humorist. She saw nothing odd in rearing a family in a public restaurant, but she did see that Timkins was allowing herself a freedom of tongue that could only be overlooked on the score of her fifteen years of faithful service.

"Say plainly what you mean," said Mrs. Crolius.

"I mean," answered the maid, "as I believes that blessed creshunt was taken from its case when I stepped down to the pantry this evening before I had quite finished putting away your things. You see, mem, Middleton and me is friendly, being both English, and he sent one of the footmen up to say as he had a plate of ice-cream and 'alf a glass of champagne waiting for me in the pantry, which is frequent his custom and no more than my dues—and liking my ices froze hard—I left your things till I got back, and away with myself to the pantry"—here her

voice became fateful—"I wasn't gone above 'alf an hour, and when I hentered that door, I saw your bed stripped for the night, and your 'and-bag wasn't where I left it!"

"In other words," Mrs. Crolius, observed, "you neglected your work, and the chambermaid tried to assist you."

"Light fingers makes willing help," said Timkins, with a sniff. "At all events I left your 'and-bag on the bed, and found it on the table, and when I took out your little purchases there was your jool-box wide open and the diamonds gone!"

"I cannot understand it," said the bereaved lady.

"At first," resumed Timkins, "it did not strike me, knowing as how you meant to leave the brooch at Tiffany's to be done over, but afterward, when I had time to turn it hover in my mind, I thought it hodd that you didn't leave the case, too, and I've been that upset I could hardly wait for you to come hup-stairs."

"And on the strength of the chambermaid having moved the bag in order to prepare my bed for the night, you are willing to suspect her of theft? For shame, Timkins!" said Mrs. Crolius, with displeasure.

But Timkins was not easily shamed.

"When ladies employs them Finns, as ain't no more conscience than fishes, they can't expect a dootiful dooty, and so I tell you, mem," and Timkins looked the righteous Briton she was.

"That will do, Timkins!" Mrs. Crolius exclaimed, greatly vexed. "Swedes are not Finns, and you have not the slightest excuse for suspecting this one. I shall advertise for my crescent in all the papers, and, in the meanwhile, I desire you not to speak of the loss."

She dismissed her loquacious abigail for the night, but before going to bed she composed the following notice, to be sent the next day to the newspapers:

Lost in New York on November 24th, somewhere in the shopping district between Tiffany's and Delgerry's or on the 5.30 train to Fastgo Park, a diamond crescent marked A. H. Crolius on the under side. The finder will be liberally rewarded by returning it to Mrs. Crolius, Fastgo Park.

Having accomplished this duty, she at once fell asleep, for she was a person of calm nerves and knew the value of a night's rest. In fact such refreshment to her energies was more than usually necessary, for the next day would see her house-party assembled, and what American hostess can meet such a demand upon her vitality without a sense of strain?

On the second morning—the morning of the twenty-sixth—the metropolitan newspapers proclaimed through the length and breadth of the land that Mrs. Crolius of Fastgo Park had lost a very valuable assortment of diamonds.

It was barely ten o'clock. The ladies of the party had not yet left their rooms, the men had already gone out in quest of sport and a luncheon appetite, and Mrs. Crolius herself was seated among billows of newspapers enjoying the wide-spread diffusion of her notices, when she was summoned to the telephone to receive a communication of so startling a character, that, for a second, she was tempted to seek manly advice. But the habit of self-reliance prevailed; she vindicated the backbone of womanhood; as usual, she met the emergency as her own intelligence dictated.

Middleton, the butler, knocked at the door.

"Would you speak with a person at the telephone, ma'am?" he asked.

Now, Mrs. Crolius abhorred the telephone. To be rung up by anybody at any hour, as if she kept a shop, was an indignity she refused to submit to—and therefore her only telephone was on the main floor in a booth inside the coat closet with a bell which rang in the pantry. Middleton was the person delegated to receive the confidences of the instrument, and when shut in the booth its secrets were secure from eavesdroppers.

"Can't you take the message?" asked Mrs. Crolius, unwilling to be disturbed.

But the butler held his ground. He was a very magnificent person who

had been with her for a year, and made himself respected by a sumptuous vocabulary.

"They refuse an intermediary, madame," he said, stiffly, "and I thought after reading of your loss in the papers"—here a look of wounded pride crossed his face, as at a confidence unkindly withheld—"that the message might have reference to your jools. Something in the nature of sealed proposals, ma'am."

Mrs. Crolius recognized the common sense of the suggestion, even though it emanated from a mere man. She allowed herself to be floated down to the lower floor by Middleton in the elevator, and, when he held the door of the coat closet open, she passed through and into the telephone booth.

"You understand the mechanism of the instrument, ma'am?" asked Middleton with an aching curiosity.

She gave a sharp nod, and he withdrew.

"Hello!" said Mrs. Crolius, with the aplomb of an expert—so much will intelligence do for raw material.

"Hello!" answered a voice. "Is this Mrs. A. H. Crolius herself?"

"It is," Mrs. Crolius frankly admitted.

"Can any one overhear you?" asked the voice, sunk almost to a whisper.

"Not possibly," said the lady. "Who are you?"

"We," said the voice, royally, "are the up-town branch of the Search Light Detective Agency. We saw your advertisement in the papers this morning, and we think we can put our hand on the diamonds and the thief. The fact is that a letter found in the pocket of a person we arrested an hour ago, on quite another charge, points to complicity with some one in your employment."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Crolius, "this is very unfortunate. Which of my people is it?"

But the detective office declined to answer that question for reasons so cogent as to appeal at once to a woman of instructed reason. They explained that the suspected person being under

her roof, any change of manner on her part was to be guarded against.

"But we need your coöperation," the voice went on. "We have known for some time that you have a noted thief in your employment, and, in order to make the arrest, and get the diamonds before they have been disposed of we must act to-day."

He then explained that they proposed sending a man to her villa to watch the servant under suspicion, and make the arrest the moment circumstances warranted his doing so, but for several hours it was very important that no one in her house should guess the real character of the detective except herself. To this end, they begged that she would furnish them with some plausible excuse both for the man's presence, and for his mingling freely with the servants in all parts of the establishment. For example, did she not need an electrician sent from town, or a telephone expert, or a plumber?

Mrs. Crolius was fired with the ambition to prove herself an efficient coadjutor.

"Have you any man capable of playing the gentleman?" she asked. "I am expecting a friend from England—Sir Henry Hone—to visit me in a day or two, but his steamer is not in. My servants know that he is coming, for his rooms have been made ready, but as he is traveling with a servant, you would have to supply a second man to play the part of valet."

It appeared that the suggestion was valued for its astuteness. Two men would work twice as well as one, while the relation of master and servant furnished them with opportunities to consult and compare notes that were most desirable while developing their plot.

A complacent smile tucked in the corners of the widow's mouth. She had yet to find the masculine undertaking that was not illuminated by turning on a side-light of female intelligence.

Before she left the telephone, details had been agreed upon. The Crolius carriage was to meet the late after-

noon train from town. Sir Henry Hone, a middle-aged English gentleman, and his servant were to be received at the Pastgo villa.

At the lunch-table, Mrs. Crolius announced the impending arrival to the house-party. Middleton, who was serving lunch, heard the communication, also Farley, the second man, also Robert, who had been buttons and was enjoying his first season as a footman in tails.

Mrs. Crolius tried to control her suspicions in regard to her household, but her mind could not detach itself from the subject. With the exception of her own maid, there was hardly a member of her domestic staff who had not some qualification for the unsavory distinction of "*suspect*." The whole female contingent were Swedes, and Timkins had managed to undermine her lady's confidence in the nation, so that no individual could escape the ban. Then there was Middleton. He had come to her direct from England, bringing the highest references from the housekeeper of one of the great show places of Warwickshire; but she reflected that references were often forged, and English servants rarely expatriate themselves without reason. Added to this, Middleton was sanctimonious; more of the bishop than of the butler!

Mrs. Crolius shrank as he poured her claret into her glass. She turned and looked at him. One of his eyes roved a little—a bad sign. At that moment Farley handed her the potatoes. A decent enough young man was Farley, but a creature of Middleton's selection—found and engaged by him during Mrs. Crolius's Southern trip the previous Spring. For the first time she noticed that his eyes were close together—foxy in expression—and *his thumbs were long*. When next his thumb closed upon her plate—the lady shuddered.

Only Robert was left in the room—ah, well! She did not suspect Robert. He was too dull!

After lunch, the party gathered in the drawing-room, the ladies smoked

their favorite brands of cigarettes, made plans for the afternoon, and the gentlemen rallied Mrs. Crolius upon her industry, for she had spread out a silk bag containing her embroidery, and her jeweled fingers were drawing in and out the tinted silks with a skill that testified to long habit. Her thimble was one of those pretty baubles manufactured for the sake of making a simple thing costly. It was of gold with diamonds, rubies and sapphires thickly studding the rim.

Farley came in with the wood-basket to put logs on the fire. Mrs. Crolius, who occupied a place at the chimney angle, pushed back her chair to make room for him. As she did so, her thimble, which she had just taken off, rolled from her lap and disappeared. Farley looked—everybody looked. The few gentlemen present shook Mrs. Crolius's skirts—respectfully, please understand—while the ladies went down on their knees, and some even put a soft cheek to the floor in order to look across the nap of the rug for the elusive implement. The wood-basket was unpacked, the rug was rolled back—all to no purpose—the thimble was gone as irretrievably as Jonah when swallowed by the whale; perhaps more so, for that conscientious fish appeared to have experienced moral qualms which produced a subsequent upheaval of the property he had attached without assimilating.

Mrs. Crolius took the occurrence coolly. She looked upon it as a link in the chain of events, and, while she assured her guests that the thimble would be found when the room was swept the next morning, she knew in her heart it would be found when the detective laid bare the magpie nest of her household thief.

At half-past five the carriage arrived from the train; its wheels crunched the frozen gravel of the drive so noisily that the sound penetrated the velvet hangings of the library where the solemn rite of afternoon tea was in progress. There was a slight flutter among the ladies, the distinguished guest was there!

Middleton threw open the door and announced:

"SIR HENRY HONE."

Mrs. Crolius looked up sharply, not at the guest but at the butler; his voice had a strange ring that might be mockery or fear, and she thought his eyes sought hers with anxiety.

Sir Henry advanced into the room. He was a slight man with small features, iron-gray hair and short whiskers, and his eyes, of pale green-gray, were like gimlets. His hands were particularly small and well kept, and his clothes were of that rough cloth such as Englishmen much affect when traveling.

Mrs. Crolius's reception of the baronet was an admirable piece of acting; she was cordial without being effusive, and dignified without being cold. She introduced him to her friends with just the right amount of impressiveness, and kept the conversation upon safe topics, not too intimate. Middleton showed a disposition to loiter in the room. He waited to hand Sir Henry his tea, he offered him successively all the dainties of a bread-and-butter variety, and then a choice selection of tea-cakes. He seemed to listen to his accent, and to scrutinize his personal appearance, and while he reconnoitered he kept himself in ambush, standing almost behind the baronet's chair when presenting his tray, and peering at him round tall pieces of furniture; at least, so it struck Mrs. Crolius, who began to fear the Searchlight detectives might be known to Middleton, even if the recognition were not mutual.

In the meantime, Sir Henry threw himself into easy relations with the guests. He was an entirely pleasant person; so ready to be informed, so full of admiration for things American, so deliciously Anglican in the breadth of his *a* and the little catch phrases one associates with the Englishmen of fashion.

The women made a circle round him; they hung upon his words; while the men, dropping in one by one, found him interested in sport and intelligent in his observations. By degrees the

conversation was brought round to a hackneyed subject, the comparative comfort of American and English country houses. Most of the party had been entertained in England, during the Autumn months, and, recalling the damp chill of those visits, had much to say in favor of American methods of heating.

Sir Henry was about to restore Hone Hall, his place in Sussex, and had timed his visit to this country in Winter with the purpose of observing our different modes of heating, and also to learn whether the complicated system of bath-rooms attached to every suite did not lead to trouble from frozen pipes when the mercury dropped below zero.

It seemed very natural that Mrs. Crolius should offer at once to have him shown over the house, and with an inward conviction that the butler was the person he wanted to observe, she rang the bell and desired Middleton to conduct Sir Henry through the kitchens and cellar, as well as over his own pantry and dining-room.

Middleton's reply to this order, of "Very good, ma'am," had a venomous sound, as if he hated to do it, and his stony face grew stonier, but he led the way to the lower regions, and Mrs. Crolius could hear Sir Henry plying him with questions as they disappeared.

She herself intended to act as his guide to the upper part of the house, but he spent so much time below stairs and then in the pantry, that she found it was almost time to dress for dinner when he at last rejoined her. His eagerness to continue his tour was so great, however, that she determined to gratify him even if dinner were slightly delayed in consequence.

"Not go over the bedrooms!" he exclaimed. "My dear Mrs. Crolius, it is the bedrooms that excite my deepest interest."

She led the way first to the servants' wing, and finding herself alone with him in the corridor, she begged that he would at least confide in her. But it appeared that was just what

he did not mean to do; he was inclined to think there was more than one person involved, and absolute secrecy was the best chance of success. A turn in the passageway brought them to the room of a Swedish scullion. The door was half open, and, as they approached, they saw the woman on her knees putting something in her trunk. At the rustle of the lady's skirts, the servant turned her head, gave a little scream, and rushing to the door banged it rudely in their faces. To be sure, modesty may have prompted the action, for the woman was in her petticoats, but the detective must have felt it significant, for he wagged his head sapiently, and seemed to note the position of the room. He made an especial point of examining the rooms of the men-servants, and, in Middleton's, he opened the window, and seemed to measure the distance to the ground—asked how it faced and what was below, tried the closet door, and murmured, "I thought so!" when he found it locked. So much time had now elapsed that most of the guests were dressing, and their rooms were closed to inspection.

Sir Henry's own door stood open. His apartment was brilliantly lighted, and his servant was busy laying out his evening clothes. Mrs. Crolius spoke to the man as she passed, and his manner of answering was so discourteous that she whispered her regrets to her companion that he should have selected such a stupid person to play valet. She feared it might excite comment among her servants, and stir up the very distrust he wished to allay.

The pseudo Sir Henry smiled, disagreeably.

"Really, madame," he said, "we do not keep a stock company of finished actors to draw upon at such short notice. My pal will do his part well enough when the time comes."

Mrs. Crolius felt she had been hypercritical.

There was nothing now open to inspection except the lady's own bed-

room with its bath and dress-closets beyond.

The detective made her show him just where Timkins had left her bag, and where she found it, asked for the empty case of the crescent, and said plainly that a person keeping valuable jewels, especially in the country, should have a safe. It was with some pride that Mrs. Crolius raised the cover from a piece of furniture near her fireplace and displayed the iron door of a safe.

"Have you ever found any indication of the lock having been tampered with, or of an impression taken in wax?" he asked.

"Never," she answered. "I always wear the key round my neck, and it works with perfect smoothness. I'm afraid I must suggest your getting ready for dinner," she added, and, dismissing Sir Henry, she rang for Timkins.

Several times she had encountered Middleton since they emerged from the servants' part of the house, and each time he had murmured, "I crave a word in private with you, ma'am," but Sir Henry flashed a look of such sharp disapproval that each time she had put him off with the excuse that she was busy and could not attend to him.

But the moment Sir Henry was shut in his room, and before Timkins could respond to her call, Middleton knocked at her door.

"Madame, oh, madame!" he exclaimed, forgetting the restraints due from a self-respecting servant to his employer, "why didn't you listen to me before? That person you are entertaining ain't no more Sir Henry Hone than I am. I've seen the real Sir Henry frequent in England, and there ain't a pint of resemblance between them. I thought he might have brought you letters without you having ever set eyes on him, and you ought to know as he is an imposture. The whole thing is suspicious, and I advise you to let me turn him out before we're all murdered in our beds!"

Mrs. Crolius experienced a revulsion

of feeling in regard to her butler. She was sorry she had doubted his honesty, she believed in the uprightness of his intentions. She sincerely regretted that she could not tell him the plain truth. She tried, however, to put as much meaning as possible into her reply.

"What you tell me is no news, Middleton. I happen to know *who* the gentleman is better than you do. All you have to do is to *let the law take its course!*" Seven nods emphasized these words, and her voice was mysterious.

Middleton's expression ran through a series of dissolving views. First astonishment, then plain doubt, and then overmastering esteem. He breathed a sigh of relief that was almost a whistle.

"You'll excuse me, ma'am"—with a burst of admiration—"but if you haven't the coolest hand and the longest head ever attached to a female anatomy my name ain't John Middleton. I'll aid you all I can, ma'am, you can count on me—and there ain't no time to lose neither. Is it New York or Fastgo police you're in communication with?"

"New York," she answered, rather bewildered by his rapid grasp of the situation, and yet not wishing to say anything more before Timkins, who had just appeared.

"We ought to have the Fastgo people on the lookout as well," murmured Middleton, and dashed downstairs to the telephone, leaving his mistress in a sad state of perplexity as to how much he knew.

At dinner, that evening, Sir Henry was even more engaging than he had been at tea time. He drank very sparingly himself, but, after the ladies left the table, his stories of strange experiences, of adventures, even of crimes were so thrilling that the men lingered over their cigars till twice the usual amount of old Crolius's 1850 brandy had been consumed, and a suggestion of bridge, that followed their return to the drawing-room, met with a reception so apathetic that only

one table was started, and that by four ladies. Half-past eleven found the party separating for the night.

As Sir Henry shook hands with his hostess, she managed to whisper: "If you mean to act to-night, you can rely on my butler for assistance."

And he had answered: "An admirable suggestion. I shall probably need him and you, too."

Mrs. Crolius looked a little dashed. No one should impugn her courage, but she was sorry her actual presence was necessary at the arrest. The events of the day had tried her nerves, and she longed passionately for a night's rest before facing any more shocks.

Such being her state of mind, it was particularly trying to find Timkins preparing her toilette for the night with a "come-to-judgment" air it was impossible to ignore. That redoubtable person rattled the brushes, and shook out her lady's dressing-gown as if she wished the stately figure were already inside it to share the shaking.

It was plainly an occasion when Mrs. Crolius had been weighed in the balance and found wanting. To others she might pose as a calm intelligence, a dominant spirit, a social power, but to Timkins she was no more than an erring woman, the dupe of her own servants and the victim of an overweening self-conceit. To the all-pervading eye of inside knowledge such attributes are as readily stripped off as a satin evening-dress, and the underlying femininity remains but a creature of corsets and garters. And then, again, Timkins was no time-server. She passed on unpleasant truth as it was revealed to her, and to-night the truth required exposition on the text of Sir Henry Hone's valet.

"There be some gentlemen's gentlemen staying in this house as might better 'ave been left at 'ome," she began, as she removed the ornamental combs from Mrs. Crolius's head, "because, in my opinion, they ain't accustomed to their business. Middleton was just saying that it's all very well to lend a hand in the pantry at

washing hup—even if his uncultured ways does snap five straw-stems and the neck of the best decanter—but when it comes to snoopin' in bedrooms as doesn't belong to his party—that ain't the kind of valet we're used to."

"The man may be untrained," agreed Mrs. Crolius, "but I happen to know he is quite trustworthy."

"Well, he can save himself the pains," Timkins snorted, "for nobody trusts him. There's Middleton means to guard the silver safe in the pantry hall night, tired as he is, with such folks about!"

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Crolius.

"It's easy saying 'nonsense,' mem, and it's easier to see a pair of knaves has pulled the wool over your heyes, and so I tell you, Mrs. Crolius!"

The lady whisked her head from the hands of her abigail, and faced her in wrath.

"You tell me a great deal, Timkins, that is extremely impertinent and improper, and the fact that I have passed over your bad manners again and again for the sake of old times does not mean that I shall do so forever."

"Oh! very well, mem," said Timkins, "perhaps you had better fill my place. There's no stint of mealy-mouthed maids going the rounds of the intelligence offices that will give you heye-service for your money."

"That will do, Timkins," Mrs. Crolius answered, with dignity; "when I need advice I will ask for it."

Timkins put wood on the fire, gathered up her lady's dress and left the room, omitting to say good night.

To await a tragedy is not inducive to sleep, and Mrs. Crolius, with all her fatigue, felt excited and overwrought, and determined to pass the night in her easy-chair by the fire. The ominous insinuation of the detective that he might need her before morning, braced her to wakefulness. If the news of an arrest had to be announced in the watches of the night, at least she wouldn't have to be summoned back from dreamland to meet it. Timkins had unconsciously given her a drop of comfort in saying that Middle-

ton meant to stay on guard on the ground floor. It was pleasant to know that one of her own people, as well as the detectives, was sharing her vigil.

She set her door open on a crack, moved the electric light to the best advantage for reading, and forced her attention to follow the pages of a new novel. At the end of half an hour, she was able to read without effort, and even began to feel a lively interest in the sorrows of the heroine. At the end of an hour, she began to feel drowsy, and rested her head against the padded side of her chair. She was hardly dozing, hardly more than floating through the debatable land, when she bounded from her chair and then sank back, every sense strained to attention.

Her bedroom was over the dining-room and her bath-room over the pantry, and, coming from below, she thought she heard the shuffling of feet, a cry, and a heavy fall.

Then they had been obliged to resort to force! She had hoped three men might have arrested one thief without personal violence. But, after all, what did she know about it? The criminal might have outside accomplices—perhaps Sir Henry was not in that part of the house—perhaps Middleton had been overpowered or even killed! The noise certainly came from the vicinity of the silver safe. Her heart beat to suffocation, and, when she tried to cross the room in order to ring for help, her knees failed her, as in a nightmare, and she sat paralyzed for the moment.

It was at this juncture that her door opened cautiously and three men marched into the room. Did her eyes deceive her! Was the gagged, bound creature who the two detectives were covering with their revolvers, Middleton? His hands were corded behind his back, and the wooden gag in his mouth was supplemented by a pantry towel.

Mrs. Crolius made a superhuman effort to be calm. She was naturally a courageous woman, and her first en-

ergies were devoted to trying to understand this strange turn of affairs and why Middleton should be forced into her presence. She felt angry and outraged, but held judgment in suspense till an explanation could be offered. The head detective shut the door; Mrs. Crolius fancied he shot the bolt, but she could not be sure. The circumstance was peculiar enough to frighten her, especially as Middleton, catching her eye, rolled his to the ceiling as one who calls heaven to witness his innocence.

"Why have you gagged the butler?" Mrs. Crolius asked. "I told you he was well disposed."

The Sir Henry detective advanced to her chair while the other continued to cover Middleton with his pistol.

"My dear madame," said Sir Henry, "your assurance is not worth as much as our observation. The man was engaged in taking silver out of the safe and handing it to a confederate outside the pantry window when we came upon him; and a good fight he made, too! This has probably been going on for a long time, and he has had the wit only to steal the pieces not in ordinary use. We gagged and bound him because any outcry would wake the household, and we think we have another arrest to make."

"But why bring him here?" asked the resentful lady.

"We didn't dare leave him, and we must get you to identify some of your property found on his person," said Sir Henry, clearing a space on the table beside her as if he meant to set out an array of treasures.

"Allow me," he said, stepping behind her chair to adjust the lamp, and, as she turned her head, a gag was pressed against her lips while a pair of torturing thumbs were screwed into the muscles of her jaws, and forced her mouth open. The whole thing was so agonizing and unexpected that she had neither time nor spirit to fight for her liberty, and, in a moment, her hands were bound behind her, as securely as Middleton's. Her tormentor motioned to his assistant for more rope,

and proceeded to tie his prisoner in her chair, which was exceedingly heavy and hard to move.

Being once more free to pursue his plans, he took from her neck the key of the jewel-safe, and, to her intense mortification, she had to watch the accumulated treasures of a lifetime transferred to his pockets. The velvet-lined shelves, and the secret drawers were rifled of their necklaces and tiaras and pendants, and, when finally her string of pearls was thrust into his pocket, the tears streamed from her eyes.

Sir Henry rose to his feet; there remained but one thing to do, namely to deprive Middleton of the liberty to wander through the house and give the alarm, for, although his hands were tied, he could yet administer kicks that would rouse the soundest sleeper. By a happy inspiration, they seated him on top of the empty safe, and bound him to that with his back against the wall.

This accomplished, Sir Henry approached Mrs. Crolius. He hung the key of the jewel-safe round her neck with the ceremony of a sovereign bestowing the order of the "Golden Fleece," and, in a whisper, he thanked her for her hospitality, which he pronounced princely and of a kind that suited him down to the ground. He next advised her, if she valued her life, not to make any outcry, even if she or the butler should manage to get free before the night was over. He even added pleasantly that he didn't know anything about her crescent, but her advertisement had attracted his attention as a thing worth working up, because a lady who owned one diamond ornament was likely to own more, and Fastgo Park was the haunt of the rich.

"Good-bye, madame," he concluded. "If I have deprived you of a few valuables, I have furnished you with an experience worth its weight in gold." He made a deep bow, unlocked the door, and, followed by his companion, disappeared.

The two dumb tenants of the room looked at each other. Middleton's

position on the safe was to the right of the fireplace with his back to the wall; Mrs. Crolius faced the fire, a little to the left. The butler's eyes rolled reproach—and before their mute accusation the lady's quailed—in fact, there was a lilt to her brows that bespoke humility.

Five minutes passed, and Middleton had an inspiration. The electric button of Timkins's bell was situated directly behind his hands, and had been overlooked by the thieves, probably because a table-cloth, which usually concealed the safe, had been hastily tossed on top when Sir Henry applied the key to the lock. Middleton wriggled his whole body till a finger came in contact with the button, and then he pressed it with a will.

In the stillness of the night, they could hear the distant tinkle, piercing and persistent, that was to summon their liberator, and finally she came, picturesquely attired in a frilled nightgown with her hair in papers.

"Well, is the house on fire," she began, crossly, before she got into the room; but at that moment she caught sight of Mrs. Crolius and Middleton with their muffled jaws, and screech after screech rent the air.

In an instant, the whole house seemed awake. The door-bell rang, voices sounded down-stairs, bedroom doors opened, every one was dashing about the corridors, and the head constable of Fastgo entered with two of his men.

"We have caught your burglars, Mrs. Crolius," he said, as he cut loose her bonds, "but they gave us a sharp chase. Your butler here—Middleton—put us onto the business before eight o'clock; he said he believed there was thieves in the house; and we had men stationed all over the place."

Magnanimous Middleton! Though the Fastgo policemen had by this time set free his jaws, not one word of triumph escaped him; in fact his first articulation showed the true sporting spirit.

"Where did you bag 'em?"

The constable, nothing loath to

vaunt his own prowess, went on with the tale.

"The fellows had a trunk of silver lashed on top of a couple of bicycles——"

Here Middleton interrupted—

"They was packin' that trunk when I surprised 'em in the pantry, and they nearly choked me unconscious!"

"You never see a neater rig than them two bicycles——" pursued the constable.

But Middleton again broke in with—"Bet yer boots, they was mine and Farley's!"

The constable lost patience at such persistent diversion of the narrative from its central interest, and marked his displeasure by addressing himself exclusively to Mrs. Crolius.

"They was trundling their trunk off, down the back road; when we closed in upon 'em, and as soon as they seen we was too many for 'em, they left the whole biz'ness and took to their heels, but we got 'em all the same, and now they're locked up in the station-house safe as rats in a trap, and I guess you won't find a jool missin'."

As the head of the Fastgo police finished his account of his successful guardianship, he freed Mrs. Crolius of the last cord that bound her to her chair, and the emancipated lady stood upright—but, alas! only for a moment. Whether the return of an interrupted circulation made her faint, or whether she was in a state of collapse, like Mr. F. C. Burnand's immortal peddler with the conceit taken out of him, I do not know, but certain it is, that she sank to the floor, as feminine a wreck as if she had never been sustained by a supermasculine intelligence.

They laid her in her bed, and there she stayed for a week. The familiar words, *nervous shock, complete prostration*, explained her condition to her guests, who were not slow in taking their departure.

They belonged to the leisure class themselves, and appreciated the necessity of succumbing at once to neurotic strain.

Timkins ministered to her lady with kindness qualified by half-veiled contempt. Spurned advice requires more vindication than what is furnished by the mute testimony of events, and she longed for such words as, "If I had listened to you, Timkins!" but nothing seemed further from Mrs. Crolius's thoughts.

The first day the lady sat up, Timkins took from her closet the identical house-gown she had worn at lunch the day the thimble disappeared, and from some shirring on the skirt the lost implement fell, and rolled across the floor.

"I suppose, mem," said Timkins, as she restored it to the work-bag, "that maybe you might like to tell Farley yourself as your thimble is found. It hurts a young man's pride terrible to be suspected of theft."

"I never accused him of taking it, or anything else—how can you say such things, Timkins?" remonstrated Mrs. Crolius.

"It ain't only the tongue that accuses, mem," returned Timkins. "You've a very cuttin' eye, and servants has their feelings!"

Mrs. Crolius was hardly strong enough to resent the imputation, and, besides, in the depth of her heart she knew she had suspected Farley, and so she only sighed and allowed Timkins to score a point.

Returning health, however, brought back her fighting spirit, and that just in the nick of time.

The day after the return of the thimble, Timkins found time to go over her lady's shelves and drawers, and for the first time smoothed out some veils Mrs. Crolius had bought during her momentous visit to town. The veils were of an expansive and springy nature, and must have burst their enshrouding paper inside the hand-bag, for as Timkins lifted them up—out dropped the crescent!

"Here's your creshunt, mem!" said Timkins, without turning a hair.

"What! Where? How abominable!" cried Mrs. Crolius all in one breath. "Then all this confusion might have been saved!"

"So I think, mem," said Timkins, primly. "I was saying to Middleton only yesterday, after the thimble turned up, that it was hard to see strangers trusted and faithful servants treated as thieves."

But Mrs. Crolius was herself again.

"Be silent, Timkins!" she said, with flashing eyes. "I should think you would be ashamed to say such things when you yourself started all the trouble by your carelessness. If you had properly unpacked my hand-bag when I returned from town you would have found the crescent, instead of leaving my things lying about for any outsider to pry into while you went to the pantry to eat ice-cream. You may also remember that when I felt sure the diamonds had been stolen at Delgerry's it was

you who made insinuations against the Swedes in my employment. I have no patience with you!"

"As I said before, mem," said Timkins, sniffing, "perhaps you can find some one to serve you better."

"Perhaps I can," said Mrs. Crolius, "indeed, I think it more than likely, though I am attached to you and make allowances—but I doubt whether you could ever find a lady willing to put up with your tongue."

It is well known that plain speaking breaks no bones. At the end of a week, this intrepid mistress and maid had so entirely regained their complacent view of their own characteristics that the instructive incidents just related left not so much as a trace on their subsequent conduct.



WHEN PEGGY PLAYS

WHEN Peggy plays, with matchless ease
 Slim hands caress the trembling keys,
 And be the theme some sweet romance,
 Love's cherubim join in a dance,
 While blissful dreams the fancy seize;

The senses float on perfumed breeze
 O'er flower-flecked fields and sun-kissed seas—
 The firelight glints on Cupid's lance
 When Peggy plays!

Oh, pray sweet Peggy's mood agrees
 That she may linger there to please!
 While I embrace the lucky chance
 To ogle Peggy's sister Nance,
 And steal a kiss that no one sees
 When Peggy plays.

HERBERT GRISSOM.



MANY a woman will sacrifice anything for the sake of her complexion—including her complexion.

DENIS READ'S COUP D'ÉTAT

By Seumas MacManus

THE drift of the discourse had run upon newspapers, and upon the startling progress of newspaper enterprise in modern days.

The docthor just lay back, looked up at the ceiling, and rolled his eyes, and simply said: "Hagh!"

"Why, docthor," said Moloney, "do you mean to dispute the fact?" For it was patent to every one at the table that the tone of the docthor's remark was one of utter incredulity.

"I dispute nothing, Moloney," said the docthor. "I know little about your enterprise in modern days, and with all respect to you, sir, I care less. But God be with the good ould times! I will assert that they were not without their share of enterprise—let you degenerate moderns drone as you please.

"I have seen men," said he, "make martyrs of themselves, and their prospects, in the cause of newspaper enterprise in them days; and there was deuced little thought of it, and darned less heard. But now, if a newspaper man is started out of bed before the hot water is quite ready, or if he sacrifices a brandy-and-soda in the cause of newspaper enterprise, the country clangs with it, the world hoists him on its shoulders, and the deed is recorded in history. So, 'tis my opinion, lads—and you's may give it what weight ye may—that 'tis not the fact of there being more enterprise now, but rather the fact that there is a hundred times more noise made over it which is deceiving you's, one and all.

"Now, there was my ould and valued friend of them days long ago—Denis Read—and his was a case in

point; and if you pass the port, Kavanagh," says the docthor, says he, "I'll give you's the story."

And Kavanagh passed the port with little delay and no words, for the docthor never required verbal encouragement.

"Well, this Denis, boys, was a singular man. He was as gay as a lark, could drink like a fish, and was as good-natured a sowl—God bless him!—as ever broke bread; and would have halved the last penny, if he had it, with the next man he met on the road, be he in distress or otherwise.

"Poor Denis, innocent sowl that he was, never took thought for the morrow; for it was his theory that no man ever yet was in rale want but if he opened his mouth God would drop something into it; and consequently, upon the twelve or fifteen shillings a week that he earned, at irregular intervals, he reveled and caroused, and lived luxuriously, feeding, in the main, on liquid food, and casting what was over to the four winds, for he never, in all his days, hoarded a ha'penny against the time of distress. As often as there is fingers and toes on me, he told meself that if he put a half-crown in his waistcoat pocket, and kept it there an hour, it would burn a hole and find its way out by hook or by crook. 'If money was not made to spend,' says he, 'I would like to meet the philosopher that would tell me the design of it.'

"Denis, God bless him! used to often say to me that his aim and ideal was to be as the lilies of the field. But the Lord knows, I suppose poor Denis, like many's another of us, fell

often short of his ideal—in some ways, at least—*exempli gratia*—in dhrinkin' more dew than was good for him, and I didn't forget to hint this to him myself.

"No matter, Denis was the broth of a boy; and the heart and soul of a whole good fellow; and the very superfluity of good-nature with which he would take ye in for a treat, and borrow your last half-crown to pay for it over the bar, would win your soul to him, if you had ever had any doubts as to its disposition.

"He called himself a journeyman journalist, and indeed he could not have named himself neater if he had searched the dictionary with a fine comb. For he had tramped further, worked upon more papers in Ireland, or, as he himself put it, drunk upon more dailies and weeklies, than any ten men of his trade betwixt the four corners of the Kingdom. Indeed, he used to boast that in all of Ireland, during his term of journalism, there were only three papers he had never jobbed upon; and two of these, he said, were still-born, and the other was sickly from its youth upward and would never be heard of, anyhow. So he used to assure his friends that if an eagle lifted one of them up, and carried him, and dropped him through the roof of any newspaper office in the land, he had only to recollect to mention the name of Denis Read, and he would get half-a-crown, instantly, to carry him as far as the next newspaper. I suppose this was true, and we took his word for it, but none of his friends ever put it to the test.

"It is probable, boys, that you's may already have got the prejudice that poor Denis had one little bit of a failing—and, indeed, there you's aren't far astray. He's dead now, and, may the Lord be merciful to him, gone to a better world, let us hope, and '*de mortuis nil nisi*,' and so forth—you's know the rest. But notwithstanding, it is not a bit harm to say—for, goodness knows, it has been many a good man's case—that the only one little failing in the world, if it be a failing,

which poor Denis Read had, was, that he loved the glass, not wisely but too well; and, at too frequent intervals, looked upon the whiskey when it was all the colors of the rainbow. However, there is no cloud without its silver lining; and Denis's case was not so desperate but that he could reform, and, to his credit be it said, did reform, very many times. As a rule and regular thing, he reformed twice a week. But on some occasions he doubled his record; though there were times—rare ones—when his lapses were so permanent, and his strength of mind so conspicuous by its absence that he would go unreformed for a month. But the reform was exceptionally permanent on occasions when he had spent all his cash, and likewise that of his friends.

"Now, I loved Denis Read for all his good qualities, and esteemed him, and would have liked to see him well and doing well; and, as I had many young journalist friends in different corners of the country, I got him many's the post; and got him posts, too, after my patience was often sorely tried with him. But, however it was, no one that knew Denis Read could resist his appeal. And if he had deceived you ninety-nine times, when he would come to you again, and plead, and tell you that this time, surely, he was going to turn over a new leaf once and for all, you would believe him and trust him the hundredth time—which just prepared the way for the hundred and first trial.

"It might have been the hundredth time, but it may have been the hundred and first—for it is such a long while since, now, and moreover, myself is getting so ancient that my memory is not as distinct as it was on the subject—but, anyhow, this time Denis Read, after I hadn't seen him for more than nine months, come sliding into me one evening, toward nightfall, and he looking the worse of the wear, sure enough.

"'Is that you, Denis, me boy?' says I. 'I would hardly know you.'

"'It's me,' says Denis, 'says he, 'and

troth you may well say that you'd hardly know me, for I hardly know myself—I'm such a new man," he added.

"Faith, and Denis," says I, 'to talk candid to ye, the new man is rather a disimprovement on the old one.'

"Yes," says he, 'from a medical doctor's point of view.'

"And," says I, 'from the point of view of what trade or profession under the skies is there an improvement? In the name of wonder, tell me.'

"From the theologian's point of view," says he, calmly, 'the improvement is vast; and if you could see me soul,' says he, 'which you cannot, you would acknowledge as much.'

"Been turning another new leaf, Denis?" says I.

"Not merely a new leaf," says Denis, says he, 'but I have turned a whole grove this time.'

"Then, Denis," says I, 'my chief apprehension will be for the grove.'

"And if that's all your bother," says Denis, 'you may make your mind easy. Denis Read has shaken from off him the shackles; and you now observe before you'—and he struck his breast dramatically—"a freed man."

"God grant it," I said, piously; 'God grant it.'

"And," says Denis, 'I want you, Dr. Kilgannon, to help me get upon my feet again.'

"At this myself couldn't help looking at poor Denis's understandings, where the soles, broken and as thin as a sixpence, were parting company with the uppers. 'And,' says I, 'Denis, my boy, if I'm anything of a prophet, you will be on your feet within twenty-four hours, and thanks to nobody.'

"Denis, he followed the direction of my eyes, and he stuck away his feet the next minute under the chair, and he said, 'That's all right, docthor; I don't like reflections upon old friends. I have looked down upon them myself for more months than I mind, but I don't like any one else to do so. And maybe,' says he, 'when yourself has seen the same service, your soul, too, may be as near its departure. However, that's not the point.'

"Well," says I, 'what is the point?'

"The point," says Denis, says he, 'is, that there is a man wanted as sub-editor, reporter, proof-reader, manager and foreman-printer, in the *Derry Clarion*; and I'm the proper man to fill the posts.'

"Humph!" says I.

"And," says he, not regarding the point of my remark, 'as I am now a new man, and wholly, completely, and teetotally reformed, I know enough of you, docthor, to presume upon our old and lifelong friendship'—here I opened my eyes widely, but the action was lost upon Denis—"and to know, that now in the hour of need, you are not the man to renaige me; and one word from you to Mahony will secure me the job, and an independence for life of twelve and sixpence weekly.'

"I only wished in my heart that I could do anything for Denis Read. I didn't cast up to him all the promises he had ever made me, and all the jobs he had gotten through me—and lost through himself; but I did point out to him there was not a bit use in the wide world trying Mahony, for had not he dismissed him no fewer than five times?

"From which very fact," says Denis, 'we have every reason to derive good hope. If he had only dismissed me once, or even twice, you would have a plausible reason for your doubts, I don't deny; but, because it has been five times, I'll have every reason to expect that he'll give me the sixth chance.'

"I was going to remonstrate, but Denis closed me up.

"Docthor Kilgannon," says he, 'you'll excuse me for differing from you. If the subject were merely a medical one, I would unhesitatingly and hastily bow to your dictum, but not, sir,' said Denis, with an elevation of his head, 'not, sir, on the subject of dismissals. In my acquaintance with that branch of human knowledge I yield to no man.'

"And surely I could not vouchsafe anything less gracious than a silent and respectful bow to this.

"Having got me to concede so much, Denis proceeded with a very plausible tale indeed—and at that same he was never a slow hand—proving to me how complete and thorough was his reformation this time—the last, final and permanent one. And not a bit of myself but he completely won over in small time; and I believed again that Denis had eventually reformed for good and all; and that he was worthy and deserving of a helping hand to get him, as he said, on his feet again. And a helping hand I vowed I'd give him. And he thanked me and blessed me, with what he called the orphan's blessing, which, he assured me, he had never known to fail in its effects yet. And he covered me all over with his gratitude.

"Denis had a bit of supper with me, and in troth he was not without need of it.

"I put him together as well as I could next morning, and hung some of my own half-worn duds on him, and brought him round to the *Clarion* office to Mahony. And when Mahony saw the man I was fetching him, he said that the only reason why he didn't set the dog on us was that he couldn't afford to keep one. But I calmed him, and made him sit down and listen to reason; and after a deal of exciting expostulation on his part, and a deal of wheedling and coaxing and cajoling on mine, and a deal of appeal, promise and protestation on the part of Denis Read, the result was that Mahony consented to take him on ten days' trial.

"And if, during that time,' says he, 'I catch the whiff of spirituous liquors about this office or about your person, or that I ever know you to make the acquaintance of the inside of a public-house, I'll show you the hole the mason made.' Which is to say he would show him the door.

"Poor Denis said his terms and conditions were nothing short of generous; and that, moreover, if inside of ten years, much less ten days, he ever found him introducing a spirituous atmosphere into the office, 'I'll allow

you,' says he, 'to take me head and knock out me own brains with it.'

"And I said, too, that if ever Denis again did touch, taste or handle whiskey, brandy or beer, or become flirtatious with any of the least spirituous of all liquors, I trusted and prayed that the corporation would be induced to bring him out on a barge, and put a necklace of millstones on him, and sink him off Innishowen Head in two-mile deep water, so there might never be any chance of his coming back to disgust poor Ireland with his presence once more. And the fervor with which Denis cried, 'Amen!' to this pious wish of mine, won the favor and the trust of both of us; more than, after the sequel, I would have liked to confess.

"And accordingly, with all trust and hope and faith, Denis Read was formally installed in the office of the *Derry Clarion* where, for the ten days, I am proud to say that he was a credit to the *Clarion*, to me and to himself. And, in all Denis Read's journalistic experiences before, no memory of newspaper man could recall one other such phenomenon.

"And ten days did not limit the length of his reform—nor twenty, nor thirty.

"'Begad, Kilgannon,' says Mahony to me at length, 'I have discovered a very treasure in this Denis Read; and it is you I have to thank for forcing him on me. I am in darned bad need of a holiday,' says he, 'for I have not had one for five years, barrin' two Shrove Tuesdays that I went to Carnedonagh to see the cock-fights. And if Read keeps on as he is doing, and doesn't show any sign of leaving the rails, I am in strong swithers to go to Glasgow, and Edinburgh, and the Scotch Highlands for three weeks. My constitution,' says he, 'can't stand the strain if I don't take a rest, and give it time to pull itself together again.'

"I told Denis, on the first opportunity, what Mahony had been saying; and poor Denis was elated at the very prospect of being left for three weeks at the helm of the *Derry Clarion*—out

of his own head, and by his own right hand, to guide the destinies of the nation.

"And," says Denis, says he, "'tis stake his head on me Mahony may do; and moreover," says he, "between ourselves, not to let it go further, you see if I don't make the *Clarion* whizz while he is gone. He'll not know it when he comes back, or my name isn't Denis Read."

"And faith, my brave Denis meant every word he said.

"For some weeks longer Denis still held as straight as an arrow from a bow. The people were saying that miracles would never cease. Mahony was mightily pleased, and said he believed he could now trust him with the keys of heaven, and that he would go off on his holiday with a light heart and an unburdened conscience.

"And, after giving him loads of advice and cargoes of directions, off he went, sure enough; taking the boat to Glasgow on a Saturday night, and by the middle of the week he was away in the heart of the Scottish Highlands; five-and-fifty miles from everywhere, and a hundred from a post-office.

"Denis was that proud a man, them days, that he would hardly borrow a five-shilling bit from a friend; and when he walked the streets of Derry you would think he was the mayor, and corporation, and harbor commissioners all rolled into one, so big was the strut of him.

"This was the third time in Denis's life that Providence, and a short-sighted editor, had thrown the responsibility of a paper on his hands.

"On the first occasion, which was in Enniskillen, where the people are law-abiding and contentious, he only had the paper swamped in a flood of libel actions, and it never came out of that swamp. And the next, which was in Sligo, where the people are impatient of the law's delays, he was thrown out into the street, and the broken plant thrown on top of him. And, having these two failures before his eyes, Denis was resolved to shine this time. He said the third time was the charm, and

he would make a spoon or spoil a horn, or know the reason why.

"From the hour Mahony skipped to Scotland, Denis had his eye out looking for an opening to distinguish himself. Not long he had to wait; and this is where he found the opening:

"There had come to Derry, only a short time afore, a new curate, with little years and large ambitions, whose chief distinguishing quality was that he lacked a level head. He was fond of fads and new notions; and if he could only dance a horn-pipe on a tight-rope he would do it to distinguish himself.

"He had kept close and sung small while he was still in his first-country parish, but when he was transferred to Derry he got the notion that his pulpit was pitched on top of the earth's axis, and, having the gaze of the world, as he believed, on him, he decided to treat the world to some of his new notions.

"And it was on this Sunday—the very first day after Mahony was gone, that Denis Read—like the good Christian that he now was, making it a point never to be found in bed at twelve o'clock on a Sunday mornin'—was sitting under the new curate, and profiting by a very forceful sermon from him.

"Now, the curate decided that it would be a very popular thing if he would go butting his head against the traditions of the churches, so he conceived the notion of advocating what he termed his 'Broader Christianity.' And, accordingly, on this day, he surprised a good many of the more conservative old members of the congregation by throwing out some pretty plain hints of the new doctrine he was going to preach and teach.

"And Denis, sitting there, with his mind half upon heaven, and half upon copy, was enthused, and saw, too, open before his excited vision, a path which possibly might lead to heaven, but certainly and surely led straight to journalistic glory.

"He was as full of thought that week as he had ever before been full of whiskey; and when the *Clarion*

came out on Friday morning, a deaf man could distinguish the new note that it blew. He had reported the curate's sermon as extensively as he could. He introduced it to his readers with a thundering two-column editorial which dealt with the wonderful progress of religious thought in modern days. He proved and pointed out the necessity for religion keeping pace with the gallop of civilization down the decades of this enlightened nineteenth century. He clapped the new curate on the back up and down the columns. He commended him highly for his depth and breadth of thought, and his bravery in expressing it; and he called on the world at large to open its eyes, from its nine days' blindness, and look at the new light. And Denis, too, having faith in the old saying that 'when a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing well,' did not stop at this, but wrote half-a-dozen letters to the editor, beginning 'Sir,' and signed by such old, world-wide favorites as 'Veritas,' 'A Constant Reader,' and 'Pro Bono Publico.' The startling result of it all was that not one less than a grand total of two hundred and thirty-nine copies of the *Clarion* were sold that week. And there was not a man, woman, chick or child in Derry but was sensationed by the new religious departure as expounded by Denis through the columns of the *Clarion*.

"He was as proud as a peacock them days, and would scarcely deign to rub noses with the editor of the biggest daily in the land.

"He knew he had made a grand stroke, and he meant to follow it up and drive it home. And drive it home he did, sure enough, in the next week's issue, over the face of which was written large, 'The Broader Christianity.'

"But, lo and behold ye, between times, out of the very joy and pride of his heart, and to steady his nerve, and moderate his excitement, my poor Denis, unfortunately, looked on the wine again when it was scarlet; and, moreover, under that stimulus his

religion grew still broader every hour, till, in a burst of zeal, he announced that so broad was his own Christianity, it included Turk, Orangeman, and Jew, Papist, Atheist and Hindu, white, black, red men and mulatto, and that the only standard by which the breadth of his religion might possibly be measured was the bee-line stretching from eternity to the furthest undiscovered fixed star. So, my lads, you may imagine that the *Clarion* that week was a terror. And, if there was sensation in the world at large, there was commotion, I do assure you, in clerical circles.

"Meantime, the new curate, finding himself so well backed, had grown still bolder, and broader, too. There was no one to tighten the rein on him, for his immediate superior had gone on the continent, and the bishop, Dr. Kincaid, was doing a tour in Connemara. But the two copies of the *Clarion* containing the new views of both curate and editor reached, at length, and about the same time, Mahony in the Scottish Highlands, and Dr. Kincaid in Connemara, and gave both of them a sweat that beat a Turkish bath all to small bits.

"Now, Mahony, when the papers reached him, was nursing a deuced bad ankle that he had got from a fall down Ben Something-or-other I can't name, over which he had been trying to spiel, and was under orders from the doctor not to budge an inch for ten days to come; only for that he would have flew home as fast as horses and boats could hurry him. But, in a boiling passion, he fired off a letter of seventeen sheets to Denis Read, calling him a rascal, and a scoundrel, and every bad name that ever was rejected by a dictionary; and denouncing him high up and low down, and commanding him, under pains and penalties of life and death, and the law of the land, to retract and withdraw every word he had said in the last two issues of his paper, and to apologize to Dr. Kincaid, his clergy, the church, and the whole world, and to show by abject humility and

obedience that he admitted his grave crime and was willing to do all in the world to remedy it.

"And Dr. Kincaid, at the same time, wrote to his clergy, ordering them to denounce the *Clarion* from their pulpits, telling their parishioners to shun it like a plague, and forbidding them to touch it with a pair of tongs, and bidding them all announce that when, on the next Friday, he would have reached Derry to attend confirmations, he would take the opportunity of preaching a carefully prepared sermon, that was to lay over the new curate and his doctrines, and set his diocese right again.

"Now, Denis, as you may suppose, was pretty much flabbergasted when Mahony's blow-up reached him. He felt like two mile had been taken off his height at a sweep; and the proudest man in Ireland was the most miserable two minutes after. He cursed Mahony in his heart of hearts; and he said it was green jealousy made him act as he did—that and nothing more. He proclaimed that this was no country for him, where enterprise and originality were hampered and fettered and tied down to millstones, and that it was in some new and undiscovered country he should be, in the heart of Africa, where his genius would get room to expand.

"It was in this state of mind he was when he came bursting into my office on the same afternoon that he had had Mahony's letter; and I remember that he was not well-seated in his chair, when the room began to smell like a still-house.

"I said, 'Denis Read, I'm sorry for ye. I see you have been falling back upon your old enemy again.'

"Small wonder I would,' said he, bitterly, 'for I have proved it now, and found at last, that the old enemy is the best friend a man ever had. Mahony,' says he, 'the scoundrel has gone back on me.' And he told me the whole case, and asked me for my advice.

"Little time I wasted on Denis, for, to tell you the truth, I wasn't more than half-pleased with him, and I said

the only advice I could offer him was to go home and take the pledge, and prepare to report the bishop's sermon in the fullest style, and write a thumping editorial, commending and praising it; and write a second article giving the curate the devil to ate. Then I held open the door for Denis, for I was in a hurry.

"But,' says he, 'tell me, tell me what explanation am I to give for turning such a summersault in my own columns?'

"Plead temporary idiocy,' says I, 'and throw yourself on his lordship's mercy. Good-bye.' And I closed the door hard.

"On the evening before the confirmations I met Denis, accidentally, crossing the Diamond; and right glad I was to find that he smelt sober. So I halted with him for a minute; and he told me that he believed he could yet save his credit and the circulation of the paper by following the grand advice I had given him.

"I have been given, privately, to understand,' said he, 'from a good authority, that unless I make a *coup d'état* in Friday's issue, the *Clarion* would immediately go the way of all flesh. And, old man,' said he, clapping me on the back cheerily, 'if I don't make the *coup d'état*, I will give you liberty to call me a gentleman. I think,' says he, 'it is just by special design of Providence that the bishop preaches on Thursday, right in the nick of time for my issue. I will give a full and grand report of the sermon,' says he, 'even if to do it I have to issue a supplement double the size of the paper itself. And I have the editorials already written,' says he, 'three of them; the first dilating upon what I call, "the wise, prudent, Christian-like, powerful and convincing sermon of his lordship, our well-beloved bishop; hoping that his weighty words will sink into the hearts of every one of the *Clarion's* readers; and that the mists and errors, which this impulsive, addle-headed curate was inflating their souls with, would be instantly dispersed by the radiance of his lordship's wisdom,

like fogs before the rising sun." And I pile on the agony in that style for the column and a half. Then, as you also recommended me, I give a sub-article, a column and a half, too, to the curate, showing him to the world for what he is; and hoping, in my heart of hearts, that no individual of either or any sex has been so simple-minded, or so despicably ignorant as to have been for the shadow of a moment misled by the diabolical doctrines permitted to be promulgated by this rash, wretched scoundrel. And you wait and see," says Denis, says he, 'if that doesn't materially help his lordship to lay the rascal out flat.

"The third editorial,' says he, 'I devote to lecturing the people on the grave danger of their being befooled and misled by false teachers and preachers in this decadent age, wherein false theories fall thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. And now, old man,' says Denis, says he, 'I put it to ye straight: don't ye think won't his lordship write me an autograph letter of thanks?'

"Go ahead, Denis,' says I, leaving him; 'I think he will decorate ye with a medal.'

"Well, anyhow, if he doesn't,' says Denis, calling after me, 'he should do it.'

"Well, my lads, to make a long story short, the next was a field day for the bishop, sure enough.

"He had only arrived home the night before, and, on his way to the cathedral that morning, he took occasion to swoop down upon the curate's rooms, and make the grand seizure of the manuscript of an elaborate sermon, which, in further promulgation of his views, the curate had with much diligence prepared.

"The bishop had only time to turn the leaves of it, and see by a dip here and a glance there, that it contained enough heresy to excommunicate a continent. And I have no doubt in the world but that this discovery, going hot foot from which, as he did, gave to his own great sermon that day a good part of the extraordinary fire

and force which spellbound us; although I must admit that it was, in itself, the most eloquent, the most learned and the richest in fruits of research of all the sermons I had ever before heard Dr. Kincaid preach. And when it was finished, every soul in the congregation said—inside themselves—with one mind, 'Where is the poor curate, God help him, and his Broader Christianity now!' And echo answered, 'Where?'

"In the cathedral, I had myself been casting my own eye about several times to see if I could spot Read; but sight or sign of him I didn't make out. I hoped in my heart of hearts, for the poor devil's sake, that he had got the grand sermon down as verbatim as it was humanly possible to have it. And when all was over, and I got outside the door, I went running round to find him; and, in two minutes, a friend I had on the lookout for him came running breathless to me to tell me that Denis was just now coming in of the gate, and he looking as if he had just got up out of a nine days' drunk. And then my heart went down to my boots, for, to tell you truth, I was mightily concerned for the scamp. I came up against him the next minute, and, faith, my friend's description didn't err one bit on the side of severity. I opened the flood-gates of abuse upon the miserable wretch, for I couldn't control myself, and he listened indeed patiently and humbly enough, shaking his head in approval of every point I made. And, when I had finished, says he, 'I admit that, by an unfortunate accident, the drop of drink overtook me this mornin'. I am ruined now entirely,' says he, 'unless, docthor, my good friend, you can show me some loophole out of the difficulty.'

"I looked scathingly at him, and says I, 'Tuppence worth of rope will afford you the only loophole I know of; and trundle your carcass outside the city boundary before you do it, so as to save the town the crowner's charges.' And I marched off, as mad as ten hatters.

"I said to myself, 'That's surely the

end of you, Read, anyhow; and 'tis maybe the end of the *Clarion*, too, and of poor Mahony, God help him! though 'tis little he deserves it. And sure 'tis myself he'll curse for it all; and no wonder, for who but myself brought it on him, and who but an omadhaun like myself would have trusted you, Denis Read, and forced you on poor Mahony once again?"

"I went straight home, and sat down by the fire, gloomy enough, and drew to me—to tell the truth—a bottle and a glass, for consolation's sake. And I was sipping a drink at my own ease when, not ten minutes later, the door burst open, and Denis Read leaped into the room, waving a bundle of papers over his head, and screaming like a sea-gull, and dancing round the table, behaving generally like a madman.

"Ye d—d fool, ye," said I, 'will ye come to your senses and tell me the meaning of all this?'

"The meanin' of it all,' says Denis Read, says he, 'is pretty plain.' He held the papers from him at arm's length and, 'The bishop's sermon, the bishop's sermon,' says he; '*ecce signum!* But the press is waiting.' And with another whoop he was gone.

"It was after it was all over I learned that the fellow had the audacity to march right into the vestry, and up to the bishop himself, and demand the manuscript of his sermon. And, when the bishop asked him for what paper he wanted it, and he told him it was for the *Clarion*, the look the bishop gave him made him turn tail and run like a sojer. And they say that to look at the indignation on the bishop's face was better than a picture-gallery.

"But me brave Denis, though he left the vestry quickly, didn't leave the building so quickly; for, on his way into the vestry, he had noticed in a sort of little cloak-room off the entry, the bishop's bag lying half open. And finding himself now in the fix, the courage of desperation tempted him to make a dash into the cloak-room, after observing that there was no one by to see him, and pull open the bag wherein, to his heart's joy, lay a roll of manu-

script, the sermon, the identical thing he was in search of, and would, that instant, have pawned his soul for.

"He didn't take two thoughts about it, but he bundled it under his coat-tails, and, seeing again that the coast was clear, made a clean dash, and escaped with his prize.

"As it was then very late, and the *Clarion* press was kept back, awaiting the sermon, he run, like a robber, for his office, only taking time, on his way, to swoop in upon me, and swoop out again. Without even opening it, to give the contents one glance himself, he hurled the manuscript at the heads of his printers and told them to 'print like the very devil,' omitting a word or two here and a sentence or two there, however, so it would seem to be set from notes, and not from the pillaged manuscript.

"In the meantime, he himself sat down between two whiskey-bottles, and threw off an eloquent introduction to the sermon, in which he said that the impression created on him by this sermon was such as he would never forget till his dying day—if then—and asserted that any one who, after hearing, or after reading, these impressive words and conclusive arguments of his lordship, Dr. Kincaid, would still presume to hold an opinion of their own on the subject of Broader Christianity, deserved to be, metaphorically, kicked out of the church and left, henceforth and forever, in utter darkness, where there would be weeping and wailing and tearing of hair, and scrunching of teeth.

"And, having thus done his duty, nobly, Denis told the foreman—who, more be the same token, was that night as drunk as ever Denis had been—to look after the proofs, and the getting out of the paper, and ordered double the regular number to be sent to all agents. And he himself went, too, to get a right good final drink which he considered he had richly earned, and then to his bed.

"When he put his head out of the window, in the morning, he seen a power of excitement up and down the

street, with the people hurrying here and there, or gathered in knots, every man with an open *Clarion* in his hand, and every man trying to shout louder than his neighbor in the excited discussion that was going on on all sides.

"'I said,' says Denis, says he, to himself, 'I said I would make a *coup d'état*, and I have done it. I have opened the eyes of these people. I must throw myself together, in as good rotation as I can, for I will stake a sixpence on it that the bishop himself, if he doesn't send a messenger for me, will be coming round here immediately, to thank me in person. And, when he got himself into as good rotation as he could, and hurried down, and took hold of a copy of the *Clarion*, and read over his own editorials once again, he was in fine feather, and a proud man. And then, after he read the great black headings over the report of the bishop's sermon, and his own glowing introduction, he cautiously dipped into the sermon itself, here and there, and was getting a wee bit puzzled by it, for he came across some sentiments that, somehow or other, seemed to him to read strangely, coming out of the bishop's mouth; and he wondered whether it was last night's drink was still confusing his head, and was squaring himself to start the sermon at the beginning, and take it all with him, when, to the poor fellow's consternation, a messenger came rushing in to say that the bishop was out of his bed and had seen the paper, and had found himself down for preaching a sermon of the new curate's, which

was as full of heresy as an egg's full of meat, and which he knew, to his confusion, every paper in the land would have copied and commented on, next day, as his words; and that he was black and blue and white in the face with rage, and there was neither holding nor tying of him, and that he had sent post haste for the police in order to swear information against Denis for burglariously stealing property from his handbag, and to have him arrested and jailed!

"And when me poor Denis heard this, the heart within him, which had been so proud and high all mornin', sunk down to the soles of his boots; but, seeing there was small time to be wasted, he pocketed all the baggage he was possessed of, which was two colored handkerchiefs and a novel, gave his left-handed blessing to the *Clarion*, the curate and the bishop, departed unostentatiously by the back door, and disappeared from Derry. And it was seven years after before one of the inhabitants or one of his friends there, was granted the privilege of advancing another half-crown to Denis Read to pay for his drinks.

"Mahony, poor fellow, when he came back, found the *Clarion* on the brink of ruin. It took big efforts on his part, and great influence, and a long time, to get the bishop mollified, and to get him to lift his interdiction off the paper. But, poor devil, he succeeded at length; and the *Clarion*, after a time, was blowing as bold blasts as ever, though it never, in all its after career, struck such another bold note as Denis Read's *coup d'état*."



NOBLE GIRL

LORD HOWLINGBROKE—You are—aw!—all the world to me, don't yeh know!

MISS GLADYS BAGROX (a chip of the old block—and the astute old block was one who knew his own business)—And I suppose you think the world owes you a living.

THE HOUSE OF LIFE

By A. C. Edwards

HE led me to an ancient House
Above the hill—a weary road;
I heard no sound of shrill carouse
Drift on the breeze as forth we strode
In silence to the still abode.

He struck upon the massive door.
I heard the echo whisper wide
Through empty hall and corridor—
Till, with a sigh, the whisper died,
Like little winds at twilight-tide.

Then slow the portal backward swung;
Across the entrance chamber small
Long silken draperies were hung,
And, shining through, we saw the hall
Aglow with waxen tapers tall.

A thousand lights that trembled not!
And on the walls were painted well
Strong legends of Sir Launcelot,
And of the heathen hosts that fell
Before the sinless Percivale,

The Garden and the wondrous Tree.
And maidens beautiful and wise
Worked in the chamber silently.
I saw no look of glad surprise
Within their calm, collected eyes.

All these held shuttles in their hands,
Which into lengthened looms they threw,
And wove a web of colored strands.
And oft the shuttle wildly flew
And fell the felted floor unto.

It seemed that they had learned of all;
It seemed that there was naught unseen,
By those clear eyes majestic,
Of all the woe that lies between
What was, and that which might have been.

THE SMART SET

I greatly marveled: Who are these
 That sit serenely, nor can hear
 The sobbing of the lonely seas,
 The moan above the buried bier,
 And yet whose eyes, so still and clear,

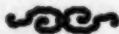
Seem to have pierced all space and wept
 With peoples on some distant star;
 Or by the banks of Lethe slept
 Beside the drowsy nenuphar,
 Or watched the gates of Death unbar?

He answered: All these things they know,
 And when the shuttle swift shall err,
 Before they poise their arm to throw—
 Yet can they neither stay nor stir,
 But weave, as in a sepulchre,

The web of Life—unceasing weave
 The circle of man's shifting day—
 From golden morn to golden eve
 They wind the silent hours away,
 And sad of heart, of heart, are they,

Because they may not choose the strand.
 But Fate, the Master, he hath chose,
 And placed the wefts beneath each hand—
 The Sorrows of the world in rows,
 And said: "Ye shall weave lives with those!"

I thought: "They wait the setting year.
 O gentle Sisters, comfort ye;
 The End of All Things draweth near."
 They turned their wistful eyes on me,
 Nor smiled nor spake, nor seemed to see.



THERE ARE SEVERAL SUCH

"SHE——"
 "Oh, she prefers to create a sensation rather than a home."



"MRS. GANDER was very lucky to get such a fine man as a second husband."
 "Yes. She goes on the principle that one good husband deserves another."

LOVE VERSUS APPENDICITIS

By Henry C. Rowland

MISS AGNES MARCH turned from her scrutiny of the glowing embers, and regarded her fiancé in pained surprise.

"Your answer is hardly such as one might expect, Worthington, from a man who has been so recently imploring the fates to grant him the opportunity of proving his devotion to the lady of his choice; something sanguinary and with a large element of physical danger preferred."

Mr. Worthington Jones squirmed uneasily, and hitched his chair a little closer to the fire. He wisely avoided allowing his eyes to rest upon the fair face of his companion as it was turned to him, rosy-hued from the reflection of the flames. Some inner consciousness seemed to warn him that to do so would be to haul down his flag in defeat. He had learned from a painfully sweet experience the witchery of the flame kindled by a glowing fire in long eyes of a certain violet hue, and, in a crisis like the present, he felt that he could afford to take no chances.

"But the proposition seems so beastly cold-blooded, Agnes," he complained. "I'd fight for you until I was hacked into small cutlets and all that, but getting my appendix cut out is quite a different matter. You see, I have no chance to cut back."

His fiancée looked upon him as coldly as was permitted through the high color of her fresh young face. Her determined little chin was set in a manner which boded ill to opposition. Mr. Jones, throwing her a furtive look, shivered slightly, and spread his athletic palms before the blaze.

Miss March spoke slowly and with

an emphasis which discouraged interruption.

"The situation is this, Worthington. We are engaged to be married in four months, and expect to take a trip around the world on our—er—honey—that is—wedding journey." Her heightened color was disguised in a sudden upward flare of the fire. "Now, you have had three quite severe attacks of appendicitis, and are just recovering from a fourth. Everybody says that the only thing to do is to have the nasty little thing cut out between attacks——"

Mr. Jones interrupted her, somewhat savagely.

"It's mighty easy to advise some one else to get sliced. I'd do it myself——"

"Please don't interrupt. Suppose we were to get 'way off in Baluchistan or Manchuria or——"

"Hoboken," suggested Mr. Jones, moodily.

"Yes—just as the steamer was about to sail——"

"But I don't believe that I ever had real appendicitis, Agnes. I don't much believe in all that yarn about one's appendix, anyway. It's got to be a sort of fad to wear your appendix trimmed close, just like your beard. I'll make the best of mine the way it was built."

"You are talking like a child, Worthington. Every progressive surgeon admits that it is an absolutely worthless structure——"

"That's rank ingratitude for you! They're worth about a thousand dollars apiece to those chaps. I'd be willing to make a cut two inches long

myself to haul a thousand-dollar bill out of some fellow I had no other interest in!"

Miss March tossed her golden head, angrily. "I had never thought to find you so *timid*, Worthington, for that is all that it amounts to. You really need have no anxiety, as the operation with modern methods and between attacks is absolutely safe. All of the surgeons say so."

"Oh, I'll admit that it's safe enough for the surgeons, and even for the friends and relatives," replied Mr. Jones, sardonically.

"I was talking this morning with Dr. Cutler," pursued the girl, ignoring his ill-timed levity. "He is that nice young surgeon who has settled here, you know."

"Yes, I have heard of him," replied Mr. Jones, darkly. "Seems to have settled here on the piazza, from all that I can learn. No doubt he'd like the job, but he won't get it unless he lies in ambush with an ax."

"He tells me," continued the girl, steadily, albeit with an apparent effort, "that he has operated one hundred cases without having a single casualty."

"You shouldn't believe all he tells you, Agnes. There are times when a doctor stretches the truth for the sake of his patient."

"He tells me that he is going to operate to-morrow morning on a young man who has recently become insane——"

"That's probably the reason," suggested Mr. Jones.

"—become insane from automobil-ing. He has lately developed appendicitis, and now he fancies that he is an automobile with his boiler burned out. Dr. Cutler thinks that this idea has been suggested by pain in the region of the appendix. He is a wonderful diagnostician."

"I should say that he was wasted in the surgical profession," observed Mr. Jones. "He ought to give it up and write novels. I should think that his talents would go to seed in a place the size of this."

"He does a good deal of operating at Dr. Markham's private retreat for the insane over on the Pine Ridge road. He's to operate there to-morrow on this poor fellow I was telling you about. Dr. Cutler says that there is always work to be found if a man is on the lookout for it."

"He ought to find it," admitted Mr. Jones. "Does he own an automobile?"

Miss March, arising slowly and with great dignity, walked to the corner of the high mantel, which she clasped in both hands, and, resting one rosy cheek against the oaken carving, looked sadly down upon her drooping fiancé.

"Since you decline to take this single request of mine seriously, Worthington, it seems to be a waste of time to discuss it."

"That's so," he assented, with assumed heartiness; "let's change the subject." He glanced at the great hall clock with an exclamation of dismay which was echoed by the girl, whose eyes had followed his.

"Why, it's almost time to start!" he cried.

"Must you go back to town? Can't you stop the night?" She stepped quickly into an alcove, and pressed her face against the curved window-pane. "It is a dreadful night, raining and blowing and black as ink."

"I really must get back to town to-night," he replied, regretfully; "I have several things to attend to before I go to the office."

"And you will consider being operated upon, won't you, dear?" asked Miss March, pleadingly.

"I shall do what seems best to me, Agnes," he replied, with a hint of impatience in his tone.

"I will tell you this much," replied the girl, quickly and bravely, attempting to wink back the tears which had gushed into her eyes at the shortness of his tone, "unless you are operated upon, Worthington, you shall never get me out of the United States. In fact," she went on, pique overcoming her emotion, "if your devotion for

me can't go to the extent of lifting this dreadful load from my mind, I'm not sure that I care to marry you at all."

Before Mr. Jones could fittingly reply, there was heard without the crunching of gravel, followed immediately by three great, agonizing bleats.

"There is the automobile!" cried Agnes. "Papa ordered that because it is so dark that you will need the acetylene search-light." She touched a bell in the wainscoting, and a servant appeared with the luggage of the departing guest, which he proceeded to pile up in the tonneau.

"Here is a great rain-coat of papa's; you can slip it on over all of your things!" exclaimed the girl, holding up the voluminous garment as she spoke.

Five minutes later, the ponderous machine, containing the chastened Mr. Jones, rolled blatantly out through the massive gateway, and started on its six-mile course to the railroad station. Although the road was of the type usually to be found in the Berkshire Hills—that is to say, narrow and tortuous, with sudden unexpected grades and, in places, running between the mountain on one side and the chasm on the other, yet such was the power of the gleaming search-light that they were able to proceed at almost the usual rate of speed and with such allowance of safety as is vouchsafed in the order of things to devil-wagons of this character.

As they swept strongly onward, now dipping with the swoop of an owl into shadowy glades where the witchmist struck damp and chill upon their faces, thence breasting powerfully the opposite grade, and, without pause for breath, plunging on into the redolent, rain-sweet woods, Mr. Jones began to feel the glamour of this dream-like ride. He had, in fact, already lifted up his voice in rhapsody, when from the vitals of the leviathan beneath him there arose a sudden outburst of wild, complaining cries. An

instant later, with a long-drawn, shuddering sigh, the automobile had subsided into an inert, pulseless mass of cooling metal.

The chauffeur, a wiry man of French extraction, leaped from his perch and dived into the machine, somewhat as a weasel slips into a pile of stones. Mr. Jones, snugly ensconced in the tonneau, awaited the verdict with dismal foreboding.

"Well, Gaston?" he inquired, anxiously, as the Frenchman reappeared.

"Ah, monsieur, it is no use. She is dead!"

"How long will it take to bring her to life?"

"One hour—two hour—it is impossible to say. But monsieur is but a mile from *ze gare*. We have come so quick *zat*, if monsieur is willing to walk from here, he has plenty of time. I send *ze* luggage in *ze* morning."

Mr. Jones glanced at his watch, and saw that he had yet over half an hour in which to reach the station, so, with a word of condolence to the unhappy Gaston, he wrapped the rain-coat about him, and plunged into the murk of the night.

Before he had gone a quarter of a mile, he discovered, to his dismay, that the road forked; but, a brief consideration assuring him that the station was in the valley, he chose the road which appeared to descend, and followed it with a confidence that waned gradually as he proceeded. For what seemed to him to be an interminable distance the road continued its sloping descent, and, to make matters worse, it soon entered a belt of timber where the darkness was so absolute that Mr. Jones had difficulty in keeping in the open, and twice wandered into a roadside rill. The second time he fell his length in the icy water, and arose chilled in body but heated in spirit.

Appreciating the absurdity of further effort, Mr. Jones decided to return to the automobile. Retracing his steps, he, in due time, reached the fork in the roads. But, as he did so, a subtle sound clove the dripping chill of the

night air and was borne in upon his senses to be interpreted as a soul-sickening calamity. From far up the valley there was carried to his ears the faint "chug-a-chug" of the departing demon, with an occasional "blat-blat" as it lifted its raucous voice in sardonic farewell.

Mr. Jones sank to the wet grass on the roadside, dropped his head upon his chest and thrust his numbed hands into the side-pockets of the capacious rain-coat, and, in so doing, made an important discovery. His right hand closed as if by instinct upon a large, smooth body, which, as he drew it forth, emitted a jovial, gurgling chuckle. He saw that what he held in his hand was a pint flask, all but filled. Evidently his prospective father-in-law was, where automobiles were concerned, a man of ripened wisdom and experience.

Mr. Jones was careful to throw no slight upon this gracious donation of the gods. Imbued with fresh courage, he rose to his feet and took counsel as to his next move. Believing that the other road must be the one leading to the railroad station, he started forward valiantly, having determined that his wisest course would be to reach the station and spend the night in a modest near-by hostelry. Much to his surprise, however, before he had gone a mile, the road which had gradually ascended led him out upon a wind-swept plain that seemed to stretch away into infinity, dark, cold and forbidding.

At this discouraging development, Mr. Jones decided that it would be well to refresh himself further, in the hope that, by stimulating his mental machinery, some light might be thrown upon the mystery before him. In this he was successful, for, as he replaced the flask, it suddenly occurred to him that the road which he was on led to Indian Lake, where there were a small hotel and a colony of Summer cottages.

"That's it," he thought to himself. "That fool chauffeur must have run right past the road to the station. As

I remember it, the hotel is only about a mile beyond that fork in the roads, and the best thing that I can do is to push right along until I strike it."

Greatly encouraged, Mr. Jones proceeded on his sodden way, covered with mud, soaked to the skin, yet fairly comfortable withal. Soon his road led him through a grove of pine-trees, on emerging from which, he saw in the distance what, from their number and extent, could be no other than the lights of the hotel.

When at last he came to the house, he entered the front door, which was unlatched, and walked to the desk. Finding no one there, he was about to proceed on a tour of investigation when he heard a heavy step on the stair outside, and the next moment the doorway was blocked by a man of gigantic stature with a jovial Hibernian face. He was clad in a somewhat tattered uniform of faded blue, and Mr. Jones was correct in supposing that he must be the night-watchman.

"Good evening," said Mr. Jones, briskly, striving to compensate in tone for that which he feared he might lack in appearance. "Are you the night-watchman?"

"I am, sorr," replied the giant, with a merry twinkle in his blue eye.

"I suppose the night-clerk has gone to bed. My automobile has broken down, so I left it back on the road and came here to get a room for the night," pursued Mr. Jones.

"You are welcome as flowers in May, sorr. Sure, I've been lookin' for you the last hour and more."

"Looking for me?" exclaimed Mr. Jones, in surprise. "Oh, I see," he went on, with a sudden inspiration. "The chauffeur discovered his mistake, and they telephoned here to say that I had broken down and would probably run in here to get housed for the night."

"Ye've hit the nail on the head, sorr," replied the Irishman, with an expansive smile. "Sure, yer room's ready and waitin' for ye, wid the bed turned back and a fire on the heart'."

"I am rather shy about going near

a fire with all this gasolene about me," observed Mr. Jones, jocosely.

"Then ye'd best hop into bed an' leave me take yer trimmin's down to dry, sorr. Sorra a one of 'em 'ud burn wid the wather in 'em," he went on, noticing Mr. Jones's bedraggled condition. "Ye'd best get into bed an' leave me give ye a good rub wid alcyhol. Will ye come up now, sorr?"

With a thankful heart, and considerably touched at the thoughtfulness of his fiancée in telephoning to the hotel to be on the lookout for him, Mr. Jones followed his guide, who led him to a comfortable room, immaculately clean and with a bright fire blazing on the hearth, and here he lost no time in removing his sodden outer garments. The watchman left him for a moment, to return at once with a night-robe and dressing-gown. In compliance with his good-humored offer, Mr. Jones stretched himself upon the bed for the suggested rubbing-down.

"Go easy on the right-hand side of my body; I've got a game appendix there," he warned.

"Then be yer lave, sorr, I'll put a bit of a poultice on; it will take out every stitch of the pain."

"You're a corker!" observed Mr. Jones, admiringly. "I guess the best thing that I can do is to put myself absolutely in your hands, and maybe I won't need an operation, after all." He yawned, and his lids dropped heavily. In the reaction of warmth and comfort, the effects of the whiskey began to make themselves apparent.

"'Twill save the both av us a dale of throuble, sorr!" observed the Irishman, with a chuckle.

Too drowsy to be surprised at this somewhat peculiar speech, Mr. Jones was about to sink into a pleasant doze, when suddenly, from down the corridor outside his room, a strident voice was uplifted in declamation.

"Water! water! water! Verily, verily I say unto you that I am sore athirst. Where art thou, thou Hiber-

nian hound? It is I, the prophet Ezekiel, who calls!"

"What in the dickens is the matter with that fellow?" demanded Mr. Jones, sitting suddenly upright.

"Nivir mind him, sorr!" replied his huge valet, reassuringly; "troth, 'tis not wather that do be ailin' him, d'ye see?"

"Oh—tight, eh?" replied Mr. Jones in relief, for there had been a note in the high voice that was strangely disturbing.

When Tim, the night-watchman, returned from his ministrations to the thirsty prophet, Ezekiel, Mr. Jones was sleeping like an innocent child. The big Irishman stole softly from the room, closed the door behind him and slid a heavy bolt, which, in a manner different from the custom of most Summer hotels, was attached to the outside of the solidly constructed door. Next, after a swift scrutiny of the corridor, he walked quickly to the stairs, which he descended heavily, but noiselessly, his rubber-soled shoes falling with a soft thud suggestive of the step of one of the great carnivora. In front of a screen door at the end of the lower hall, he stopped and rapped several times.

"What is it?" finally came a drowsy voice in answer.

"'Tis me, docthor, Tim. 'K.2' shlipped out av the house this avenin' just after I came on——"

"What!" came sharply from within. "Why didn't you wake me?"

"Och, ye were shlapin' that aisy, docthor, dear, I hadn't the heart to wake ye!" replied Tim, soothingly. As a matter of fact, he had himself been peacefully asleep. "Sure, there's no harm done, sorr. The minute he was gone I started to luk around for him, and there he was be the stove in the office, havin' just stepped out for a rowl in the mud."

"Where is he now?"

"Back in his crib, sorr, rubbed down slick an' smooth wid alcyhol and a bit av soap-poultice on the stummick av him."

"All right—don't let him get out again."

"Devil a fear, sorr. Good night, sorr!"

Mr. Jones was aroused from deep oblivion by a sweetly modulated girlish voice at his elbow. Looking up in amazement and incredulity, he was scandalized beyond expression to discover, standing unconcernedly at the side of his bed, a charming vision in snowy muslin. In one hand, she held a small glass containing a colorless solution.

"What a splendid sleep you have had," she observed, pleasantly; "it's almost ten o'clock!"

"W-w-what?" replied the palsied Mr. Jones.

Her pretty face smiled down at him reassuringly. "I thought that you would never wake up," she replied, brightly, "so I had to wake you, myself. Now drink this, like a good fellow," she added, coaxingly.

"B-b-but who—are you?"

"Oh, I'm your day-nurse. You haven't seen me before. Miss Hallaway was on when you came in last evening, you know."

"She was!" exclaimed Mr. Jones, blushing furiously. "Why, I thought it was—eh—an Irishman—"

She laughed, merrily. "Oh, that was Tim—he's the night-watchman. Now drink this, like a good man, and it will clear things up!"

"Then you'd better bring the bottle!" replied Mr. Jones, eagerly draining the contents of the glass. "Jove! what whiskey that of the old man's must be!" he added, under his breath.

His attractive attendant deftly swung a small, enameled washstand to the side of the bed, and poured some water into a basin.

"I say—what's that for?" demanded Mr. Jones, in surprise.

"For you to wash your face and hands," she replied, smoothly.

"B-b-but I don't think that I understand!" replied the bewildered Mr. Jones. "Where am I, anyway?" He grasped his head firmly in both hands and closed his eyes, seeking vainly a solution of the perplexing mystery.

"Am I off my base—or what? I thought that—the—automobile broke down—and—"

"There, there!" she interrupted, soothingly, while an expression of real pity crossed her fresh young face. "Don't worry about that; you are with your friends. How does your side feel this morning? Have you any pain?"

"Not a bit—by Jove!—what's this contraption around my waist? Oh, for heaven's sake!—what the dickens—I beg your pardon, but I can't seem to get straightened out! What is this place?"

Under the stress of his emotion, Mr. Jones's aristocratic face had suddenly grown so wild that the nurse surveyed him anxiously, and quickly touched a button at the head of the bed. A youth in white duck clothes appeared in the doorway.

"You had better get Tim," whispered the nurse. "I'm afraid he's going to be violent. Has the doctor come yet?"

"He's in the operating-room. He says to give the anesthetic in here."

A minute later, as the now panic-stricken Mr. Jones sat staring wildly about him, the huge Irishman entered the room, followed by an alert young man who carried in his hands an odd-looking apparatus of rubber and gleaming metal, from which there emanated a sickening and forbidding odor. With infinite relief, Mr. Jones's eyes fell upon his friend of the night before, who, in the present stress of his emotions, seemed to be the first actuality which his tortured vision had beheld in this weird place of enigmas.

"Oh, there you are!" he exclaimed, in relief. "Now just get my clothes, and ask these people to get out of here. I'll make my inquiries by mail."

"Everything is all ready, Miss Vincent," remarked he of the strange, malodorous machine. "I suppose he'll kick up a fuss, but I guess that Tim and George can restrain him." He turned to the pallid Jones.

"Now lie down, my friend, and do as I tell you!" he commanded, authoritatively. He walked to the bedside,

and pushed Mr. Jones gently but firmly back upon his pillow.

"Who the devil are you?" cried the agonized Jones, furiously; then, at the pressure of the other's hand, all self-restraint was swept aside. Arising suddenly in bed, he struck out with all of the force of his athletic right arm. The blow landed squarely over the young man's eye, and sent him flying across the room. The next instant, Mr. Jones was pinioned firmly by two pairs of mighty arms. He saw his enemy returning swiftly, his face filled with a fiendish purpose. Something soft and suffocating was crammed down over his nose and mouth. For an instant, he struggled desperately, striving to cry out; then his senses whirled in space, and he sank into oblivion.

Young Dr. Cutler and his youthful assistant walked smartly down the path leading from the sanatorium, and turned into the Pine Ridge turnpike. The surgeon was in the happy state of self-satisfaction which usually follows a necessary operation skilfully performed, and unlikely to be followed by aught but a safe and speedy convalescence. As they passed through the gate, he turned to his assistant.

"That was a typical case for operative interference, Dudley. Another attack would probably have put that man out of the hunt for good. As it is, he should make a good recovery, and you can't tell, it might even have a good effect upon his mental condition. Operations sometimes do."

"Funny case of aberration," replied the younger man, tenderly stroking a raised discoloration over his left eye. "Thinks he's an automobile, doesn't he? By George, for a minute or two I was rather inclined to agree with him!"

They had turned into the highroad and were walking toward the hotel about a quarter of a mile farther on, where they had planned to lunch with a mutual friend. As they passed a deserted farm-house which stood a little way back from the road, there suddenly fell upon their ears a series of strange and discordant cries.

"Chug-a-chug, chug-a-chug, chug-a-chug—toot-toot—sh-h-h-h—s-s-shoo—shoo—"

"What in—" began the surgeon, in amazement, for the sounds were obviously proceeding from the lusty throat of a man. The next instant there was a crash and a rattle of planks. A weird figure, swathed in a mass of unclean bedding, hurtled suddenly from the doorless aperture and bore swiftly toward them.

"Toot-toot!" he yelled, wildly, "get out the way—I'm an automobile!"

Too paralyzed to move, they stood open-mouthed and staring in the middle of the road. He of the flowing robes never faltered in his mad career, but, bearing down upon the surgeon, collided with him with such violence that both men rolled in the dust of the road.

The surgeon was the first to recover his feet. His assailant lay where he had fallen, emitting a strange hissing noise.

"Why didn't you clear the track?" the latter demanded, peevishly. "Confound you—now my boiler's burned out!"

For a moment, the surgeon stared down at him in a dismay too profound for any expression; then, with a feeble sigh, he subsided, an inert mass on the damp grass of the roadside.

"Rum!" he gasped, through quivering lips. "Give me rum! Quarts of it—gallons of it! tuns of it! Let me drink and never afterward awake!"

Mr. Worthington Jones reclined luxuriously against his pillows, and surveyed the abject surgeon with the indulgent eye of a generous conqueror. In his hand he held a small bottle, tightly corked, in which there floated a once menacing portion of his anatomy. At intervals his eyes would fall upon it with a satisfaction too deep for words.

"Well, doctor," he finally observed, "of course it was an inexcusable error on your part, but I am not disposed to be nasty about it!"

"My dear fellow," replied the sur-

geon, meekly, "I unhesitatingly admit that the joke is on me!"

"Not altogether," replied Mr. Jones, kindly; "in fact," he continued, "while there is but slight ground for the supposition, I am inclined to fear that many of my friends might take the other point of view."

"Many of one's friends are such asses," began the surgeon, hopefully, "that, while the fault is mine, I suppose if the story was to get around, you might never hear the last of it."

"Possibly—that might apply to either of us," replied Mr. Jones, sweetly. "The medical profession is so hungry for the chance to roast a colleague; especially one who is young, ambitious and not without a certain ability."

The surgeon straightened his back.

"Have you—eh—any proposition—eh—anything to suggest?" he inquired, coldly.

"I have," replied Mr. Jones. "Suppose that I had consulted you professionally. Would you have advised an operation? I ask you this as man to man."

"If I had not," replied the surgeon, with deep feeling, "I should have been unfit to practise my profession."

"Very good. What would have been your fee for such an operation, including the subsequent treatment?"

"In your case," replied the surgeon, qualifiedly, "five hundred dollars would have covered it, not including your hospital expenses."

"Very good. I have always understood that these cursed things"—shaking the bottle savagely—"were expensive luxuries. Now, doctor, I have a proposition to make, actuated not by the fear of ridicule, but by loftier motives. We will consider that I have sought this operation, and that it was all done according to Hoyle. Send me your bill for five hundred dollars, and I will mail you a cheque—*provided* the story does not get out—especially to the ears of my fiancée, Miss March, and her family."

A sudden light flashed in upon the alert perceptions of the surgeon; he

strove in vain to stifle the audible laugh that arose to his lips. From his pillow Mr. Jones grinned back, expansively.

"You are more than generous!" cried the surgeon, enthusiastically, "but really, you know, I can't take a fee for a bull-headed blunder like this!"

"I would much prefer it," replied Mr. Jones, decidedly.

"Oh—well—" answered the surgeon, weakly, "of course, if you insist—"

"I do. Do you think that you can close the mouth of the cub who smothered me? B-r-r-gh!"

"As easily as you closed his left eye," replied Dr. Cutler, emphatically.

"And this loco outfit?"

"They will be silent as the grave—for their own sakes."

"Good! Then it is a bargain, doctor. When you go down, will you kindly telephone the glad news to Miss March?"

"I will do so at once," replied the doctor, feelingly.

Early the following forenoon, while Mr. Jones was resting comfortably, there came a rustle outside his door which sounded to his expectant ears like the flutter of the wings of angels. An instant later two round arms were thrown tenderly about his neck, and his face was covered with tears and kisses.

"Oh, Worthington—my own darling boy—my dear, brave hero!—to think of your coming here all alone, and without saying a word to any one! My precious!"

"My dear little girl," replied Mr. Jones, with deep feeling, "I am entitled to no praise whatever. I simply could not help myself. Sometimes, you know, our destiny is in higher hands than our own! I'm glad it wasn't an amputation, though!" he added, with a shudder.

"You great, big-hearted darling—and to think of your daring to come to this awful place!"

"You do it an injustice, dear. I was never in a more godly company in all my life. The prophet Ezekiel is just next door, there are two John the Baptists down-stairs, and there is an angel in my room at the present moment."

THE HUNTER OF DREAMS

HE is hunting a dream in the fields of Thought
Over the brooks and far away;
He can hear far down on the purple wind
The dream-hounds' slumberous bay!

Out of what nook did the quarry start?
What tangle of fantasy, still and deep,
Hid the sly rover, soft-footed rover,
Fresh from the hills of sleep?

Is it his youthful dream of power—
Fleeting, fleeting ever and aye?
Is it his dream of a deathless fame
And his star against the sky?

Down the wind he's hunting his dream,
On and away through the glooming wood—
Following, following, following far
To the dunes of Solitude.

Is it his own true love he seeks—
Seeks and seeks as she flies before?
Dreams he, in vain, he catches the light
That lures forevermore?

Hath he not heard, in a secret hour,
That a dream leaves never a trace behind,
Save only an echo within the heart
And its light upon the wind?

He is hunting a dream in the fields of Thought
Over the brooks and far away;
It has hidden deep in the darksome wood
Of the Vale of Yesterday!

JOHN JEROME ROONEY.



WOMAN'S RANK INGRATITUDE

BENHAM—I have had my life insured for five thousand dollars in your favor.
MRS. BENHAM—Well, I'll be glad to have the money, but I think you've overestimated your value.

IN EMPTY COURTS

HIS love is warm and constant as the sun—
 Like sunlight in the outer spaces spent;
 In empty courts where tinkling fountains run
 And flowers bloom, and he is well content.

To you my heart must turn for all its light.
 Alas! the grudging taper that you give!
 So small to make the inner temple bright,
 So dim to give the glow by which I live!

He is the sun, for all the world to mark—
 So warm and fair he shines! nor understands
 That I must still be crouching in the dark,
 Shielding a little flame with loving hands.

NORA MAY FRENCH.



WITHOUT PREJUDICE

PROPRIETOR—I want you to make a picture of my Summer hotel.

ARTIST—Can I see it?

“Heavens, no! It might prejudice you.”



SOLITAIRE!

IN truth, I ask nor diamonds
 Nor rubies for mine own—
 Your heart is hard enough, my dear,
 To be my precious stone.

CHAPIN HOWARD.



THE FORCE OF HABIT

STRANGER—Pardon me, sir, but have you a wife?

DRUGGIST (*absent-mindedly*)—No, but I have something just as good.

THE ROYSTONE BANK CASE

By Julian Hawthorne

JAMES THORPE ALLINGHAM was sixty years old; his compactly molded face and dark eyes, in which there was often an ironic expression, showed few marks of time; but his close-cut, silvered hair betrayed him. He was a slightly-built man, little above medium height, but wiry and active, yet with a vein of the voluptuous, indolent Oriental in him. His bristly, short beard, trimmed to a point in the French style, had more of the original black in it than his hair. A fire was wont to sparkle from his eyes, intolerantly if he were annoyed or opposed; but imperiously and audaciously, under the influence of beautiful women. His small head was packed full of a fine and strong brain, clear, cold and penetrating; acting upon his emotional nature, it had made him skeptical; a deep sense of humor wrought the skepticism into a chuckling, disconcerting mockery. He dominated most men, and no woman who had known him well ever forgot him.

He was a university graduate, a reader of books of science, familiar with good literature, of bold views, independent in thought. He had the finest breeding, easy, confident and quiet. He dressed correctly, but wore his clothes carelessly. He had inherited a fortune from his father, had taken up banking twenty-five years ago, and achieved more wealth. A first wife had died while he was in his early thirties; he had married again at forty, and had a daughter now nineteen years old, whom he loved. His present wife, a religious, simple woman, had brought him this daugh-

ter and money, but nothing else that he valued. He was a man of power and leading in the city of Pennborough, where he had lived since founding his bank. He had been offered, and had refused, high political preferment. He lived like a prince in his big house on Curzon street. In business he was thought keen but conservative, and his financial credit was unquestioned. The Roystone National Bank was the best bank in the city, and the best people kept their accounts at it.

Olympia Allingham had had her coming-out party a few weeks before this narrative begins. She was a handsome, innocent, tender-hearted, high-spirited girl, with dark hair and blue eyes. She loved her father devotedly, and honored him religiously. At the time of her coming-out, her engagement to Stephen Bentinck, a young physician of ability and reputation, had been announced. It was a love-match. Stephen had a good practice, but was not rich; but Allingham favored him, and the financial path would be made smooth for the young couple. It was now early June; they were to be married in October.

Allingham sat in his private office, though it was after banking hours; for Eugene Calverly, the cashier, had said he wished to speak with him that afternoon. Calverly, a man of forty, had entered the bank young, as a clerk, and in fifteen years had attained his present position. He was methodical, intelligent, and perfectly trustworthy. His deep-set gray eyes were steady; his utterance measured and emphatic. His mind plodded

where Allingham's leaped or flew; but the latter knew his value. Allingham was accustomed to rally him and break jests upon him, but he respected him. He was also aware that Calverly loved Olympia with a worshiping passion, the only one of his sober life. It had probably never been other than a hopeless passion; certainly, Allingham himself, ever since he had surmised it, had always frankly discouraged and even ridiculed it. Olympia had never known anything of the matter; she was very kind and familiar with poor Calverly. He had sometimes held her in his arms when she was a baby; she did not suspect what he would have given to do so now. This was one of the silent, honorable tragedies. When the engagement between her and Stephen Bentinck was made known, Calverly seemed to become more round-shouldered and methodical, but he said nothing.

The theme of his present interview with the president of the bank was not an agreeable one, but it had to do with business, not romance. We need not follow it in detail. Owing to various causes, capital had been flowing away from the bank, and little had been coming in. The balance on hand was dangerously small. Unless this situation were soon changed for the better, calamity was at hand. No breath of suspicion had as yet blown upon the credit of the institution; but were a few large depositors to draw heavily, the secret would out. That was the gist of his statement. Had Mr. Allingham any suggestions or information to give?

The banker's pointed, aggressive chin seemed to thrust out through his grizzled beard as he turned on his cashier with a smile, looking him in the eyes.

"Aren't getting scared, are you?" he said, in his quick way, with a sort of chuckle running through the words. "Any time you think you're over your depth, swim ashore, you know. You can get a position somewhere; I'll see to that."

"No; if we go down, I sha'n't want to swim any more, Mr. Allingham," replied the other. "In any other place than this, I should be out of my element, if not out of my depth. But I would drown, or do anything else, to help you and yours," he added.

"Oh! Well, suppose you begin with cooking the books for the state examiner," Allingham suggested, still smiling.

Calverly accepted this as an instance of his employer's irony.

"I shouldn't think of asking for your confidence, beyond the limited extent which my position necessitates," he said, with a sigh. "You have the responsibility, and you do the business; the directors leave it all to you. I only thought, if you should care to talk over anything with me—any service I could perform—I am at your disposal."

"I see—very nice of you—faithful retainer of the house, and so forth! Possibly, too, you may be influenced by the prospect of seeing Olympia thrown out on the streets to beg her living, and deserted by her fiancé?"

Calverly's long, pale face reddened; he bent forward, and wrung his long fingers together between his knees. "Oh!" he murmured, in a low voice; "oh, Mr. Allingham!"

"Still, even to save Olympia, you'd draw the line at cooking the books?" the banker pursued, tilting back idly in his chair. "To be virtuous, we must sometimes be cruel, eh? I suppose your virtue is what keeps you up to the scratch, as whiskey does other men, doesn't it, Calverly?"

The cashier tilted his head to one side, with a distressed expression, but was silent.

"Oh, you're no fun, Calverly—you're stupid!" exclaimed Allingham, impatiently. "Is there anything else?"

"No," said the other, rising. "But I think I understand—you've relieved my mind—I know that if you knew anything—"

"Oh, go to the devil!" chuckled Allingham. "I'd ask you to dinner, but Stephen will be there, and you'd have no appetite. Only one hundred and

sixty-seven thousand left in the safe, is there? And my house is worth about twice as much; furniture, say a hundred thousand; real estate and other investments, maybe a million. Liabilities, two million odd, was it? Yes, that bank examiner will knock spots out of us, won't he? Make a good scandal for the newspapers, won't it? Been in business quarter of a century; possessed the confidence of the entire community, and turned out rotten, after all! Too bad, really! I say, Calverly, I want to ask your opinion on one point."

The cashier, who had moved slowly to the door, turned round. He had been reassured by his employer's remarks, or, rather, by the scornful and mocking manner of them; it would have been impossible to speak in that way had anything been really wrong. As for the contemptuous, sarcastic tone, he could put up with that; he was used to it. But the changed voice in which the banker now spoke startled him, and it was with some return of apprehension that he met his look.

"What age does a man, hitherto honest, have to reach, before he may be considered past all danger of embracing a criminal career?" Allingham asked, quite gravely, but with that fire in his eyes which Calverly had occasionally seen, and always dreaded.

The cashier stood bewildered, unable to make any rejoinder.

"Come, brace up, my man," continued Allingham, after a pause, during which he had looked straight into the cashier's fixed eyes. "Am I too old—supposing me to have been honest until now—to begin stealing? Answer that!"

Calverly found his voice with difficulty. His thoughts stammered, like his words.

"I—Mr. Allingham! You, the father of . . . For twenty years I have looked up to you as of inviolable integrity. I can no more conceive of such a thing than . . . I beg your pardon . . . Oh, I am sure you are jesting!"

Allingham lifted his black brows,

threw himself back again in his chair, and laughed gently and pleasantly.

"Oh, found me out at last, have you? All right; trot home and sleep sound. I must try to be more serious in future. The bank will go on all right, Calverly. Good-bye."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Allingham, and again I beg your pardon," replied the other; and he went out with a lighter heart than he had come in with. Of course it was all right; there were resources in that man that could never be exhausted.

The banker, left alone, sat quiet in his chair for a while, twisting his beard and gazing at the floor. "Well!" he said, at last. Then he closed his desk, took his hat and went home, with the light step that speaks a free mind.

II

THERE were only the family and Stephen Bentinck at dinner at Mr. Allingham's that evening. It was a quiet and comfortable *partie carrée*, with old Philip Dorpe, the butler, waiting on them.

Stephen's head was high above the ears, full and deep; his features were marked, and his cheeks hollow, but with a healthy color in them. In body he was athletic and slender. He had a slow, grave smile, which was delightful to see; it brought a lovely, sparkling, gentle light into his eyes. He had kept pure the high ideals of conduct of his youth. He was of great diligence in his profession, learned and conscientious, and a natural thinker, which gave him the valuable quality, in medical practice, of originality and initiative. In general society he was retiring, reticent and shy; but with those he liked and trusted he was genial, playful and expressive. He was not an easy man to become familiar with; but it was not difficult for those who came in contact with him to perceive that he had a large, luminous, equitable mind, a feminine tenderness of nature, and, underneath, a sinewy masculine fiber,

giving assurance that in emergencies he would never fail to show the true manhood of a man.

"There was another of those awful cases of a bank cashier taking the funds of the bank and running away, in the paper this evening," observed Mrs. Allingham, in her plaintive voice. The good lady was perhaps morbidly religious, and very sensitive to moral lapses in members of the community; and this sensitiveness was kept alive by her habit of perusing the daily journals, and dwelling upon those features in them which recount the frailties of the race. "He is said to have been a church member, too," she went on. "I'm sure there will come some terrible visitation upon mankind for all this wickedness. There seems to be no respect for the laws of God or man."

"What do you say to that?—are we growing worse or better?" demanded Allingham, cheerfully, looking up at Bentinck with his inquisitorial smile.

"It seems to me, the worst thing is hypocrisy," the young man said. "Such cases as Mrs. Allingham speaks of show that the man could not any longer bear to do evil while everybody believed he was doing good; he preferred to break out and be known for what he was. The community is like the body: when the disease appears on the surface, it is uglier to look at, but less deadly than internal lesions. There is more hope of curing them."

"Oh, that's a sagacious doctrine," laughed Allingham. "The worse we appear, the better we are! That ought to satisfy both sides. Quite diplomatic!"

"Don't mind him, Stephen," said Olympia, with the confident optimism of girlhood. "Nobody hates deception so much as papa. He even likes to pretend he's bad when he's good."

"Wealth is a new thing with us," Stephen continued; "we don't understand it yet, and so we think it all the more desirable. It divides us into a few giants among a lot of pigmies. But when the novelty has worn off,

nobody will care to be a giant, and then the temptation to try to become one, which causes more than half the crimes, will be gone. There are never many people strong enough to turn from anything that really tempts them; when there is constant temptation, there will be more yieldings than usual, but not on that account more intrinsic wickedness, do you think? We are passing through a phase of growth, which always weakens temporarily; but experience will cure it."

"Well, it's no new philosophy that society stimulates crime in the individual," rejoined Allingham. "The strong men must come out on top; what is the real top, is the question. As long as we think it's wealth, there'll be crime, because we don't know how to give wealth to everybody; besides, wealth makes people polite and pleasant to you, and we all like that. A time may come when people will be polite chiefly to beggars—as I believe is the way in India—but meanwhile, those who have or can get wealth are bound to keep or seize it, by fair means or foul. As for hypocrisy, in three cases out of five, a man is a hypocrite, not for his own sake, but for his wife and children's; they believe in him, and he can't find the nerve to undeceive them. What is wickedness, anyway? It's just a bad name for doing the best we can for ourselves; and that's instinct!"

"Then don't you think criminals ought to be punished, papa?" asked Olympia.

"If you can catch 'em—by all means," said her father, laughing; "but the punishment will always be not for their crime, but for letting themselves be found out. For getting found out shows a weakness in them somewhere; and weakness is unforgivable. We're like a pack of wolves; as soon as one of us is wounded, the others tear him to pieces."

"You are very radical!" said Stephen, encountering the other's eyes, and gradually smiling.

"Oh, it's terrible!" lamented Mrs. Allingham. "I really think, James,

you ought not to jest in that way in the presence of young people. You confuse their ideas of right and wrong."

Olympia arose and kissed her father, and stood beside him, looking down on him with radiant confidence, her arm around his neck. "Papa never confuses me," she said. "He's the best and dearest man in the world—he and Stephen, I mean!"

"You see the way hypocrites are made!" said Allingham, laughing at Stephen.

Dorpe came in and said: "If you please, Mr. Allingham, there's a gentleman in the anteroom; says he called by appointment, sir. Shall I show him into the drawing-room?"

The dinner was over; they had been at nuts and raisins for some time. Allingham stood up, and put his daughter's arm from his shoulder. He drew his napkin across his bearded lips, and threw it down with a frown. But in the same moment his brow was clear again.

"That's all right," he said. "Take him into the study. I'm coming."

"These business people ought to see you in your office, and not come after you here," Olympia declared. "You belong to us, here; we don't go bursting into your office, and disturbing you there."

"Oh, this man is a special case," replied her father, taking her hand and patting it. "It wouldn't do to have him seen around the bank. He's a great financial genius; if our credit were to go down, he's the man to restore it. But if it were known that he and I were plotting together, the depositors would be tumbling over one another to-morrow to draw out their balances; and I shouldn't be able to afford you a trousseau."

"I don't like such a man," said Olympia. "Send him away, papa—or let me come into the study with you and hear what he has to say."

She was half in earnest, and held him by the sleeve.

He seemed to hesitate a moment, and gave her an intent look. Then he drew his arm away.

"No—it's too late!" he said, briskly and laughingly. "He has me in his toils, and I must sign my name in his book! Go and play with Stephen. I can't risk slipping up on that trousseau of yours, you know! Go in and play. I'll be back presently."

Light and alert as usual, he passed from them down the wide hall. Just before he disappeared, he turned and saw them standing in the light of the chandelier; Stephen had given his arm to Mrs. Allingham, and Olympia was close to his other side, and she waved her hand and kissed her fingers to him. He returned a quick, bright nod, and was gone into the shadows.

"I know it's somebody come to beg money of him, and papa doesn't want it known, and that's why he wouldn't let him come to the bank," said Olympia. "Papa does more good that nobody knows of than any other man in town—except you, beloved." And she laid her cheek for a moment on her lover's shoulder.

The visitor, standing invisible in the unlighted study, saw this picture of the young man between the old woman and the girl, and the girl's gesture of love. It shone out on him, and vanished, like a glimpse of heaven. But it had found its way into a dark and stern heart. Its image remained there after the active, erect figure of his host had intervened in the doorway, and the door had closed behind him as he came in. Then the host pressed an electric button, and the room was flooded with light.

The Rubicons of life often seem to be crossed swiftly and easily; but it is only because the last step of the crossing is the first one that we take note of. There have been many previous ones, and, at each one, the chance to draw back. Allingham's soul had been, longer than he himself perhaps imagined, preparing for the culmination which had now arrived. The dark influences that guide us to evil, disguise, as long as possible, the increasing perils of the path; and when, finally, the disguises are thrown off, they have acquired other means to hold us. We

may believe we are freest at the moment when we are first irrevocably slaves.

The electric light softly flooded the room; but in the same instant, the last rays of an inner light were withdrawn, and the spirit upon which they had rested stood in darkness.

III

ALLINGHAM and his visitor now stood face to face, and scrutinized each other with interest.

The room in which this interview took place possessed individuality. It was the private retreat of its owner, and, more than any other part of the house, reflected his traits. Both the intellectual and the emotional qualities of the man were intimated in it. It was a spacious room; the walls, to the height of a man, were lined with books in handsome cases; above them glowed pictures, uttering beauty, sublimity, or passion; in one corner, a bronze group by Rodin portrayed a girl led downward by a satyr. Beneath a stained-glass window was a deep divan, with silk cushions, and low-seated easy-chairs stood by glistening tables, with magazines and portfolios. Upon the carved mantelpiece stood tall Venetian glasses; and all those things spoke of culture, slightly tinged with the voluptuous.

But, peeping forth here and there, like untoward visages through interstices of fair foliage, were indications of another tenor. Squatting in a compartment of one of the bookcases, between books of religious and social philosophy, was an exquisitely-wrought but horrible Japanese wood-carving of a man committing *hara-kiri*. Under the allegorical form of the sacred Dove, in the stained-glass window, hung a stuffed South American bat, with outspread dusky wings and hideous face. Some of the most handsomely bound books bore the names of the grossest French and Italian writers. A small alcove was fitted up as a chemical laboratory, but it was noticeable

that most of the drugs and solutions were poisons. On a wall of this alcove hung a drawing, badly executed, but wonderfully expressive, of a peculiarly revolting Voodoo rite. The catalogue need not be extended. Such features might be regarded simply as the excursions of a mind resolved to become philosophically conversant with all parts of nature and human nature; but, the more they were examined, the more did they seem to imply a voluntary perversity, a pregnant outlawry, a vicious curiosity, a flattered rebellion of the dark against the bright. The first impression was of an unwelcome discordance; the final one was of the deliberate profanation of good, and mockery of truth. And, doubtless, though a man may dwell long in the mere imagination and histrionics of the unlawful, a time will arrive when the facile dream stiffens into unchangeable reality, and the beguiling slave changes abruptly into the master.

Allingham's bidden guest was a sturdy man of middle height, with a powerful head and face and dark auburn, short-curling hair. He was well but unobtrusively clad in dark garments; his hands were small but very muscular; in one he carried his black derby hat, the other rested on the gold head of an ebony cane. His bearing was studiously undemonstrative, and his countenance expressionless; but his half-closed gray eyes gathered all details and significances in a glance.

"You're Mr. Dexter Gunn, are you?" said Allingham, after a pause. "And you're the top of your profession?"

"I call myself by that name, Mr. Allingham," replied the visitor; "and I suppose I have my points, as you have yours." His voice was smooth and unmodulated, though with evident force behind it.

Allingham made another short pause, as if to give the personality of his interlocutor time to stamp itself upon his senses.

"Well, you look the part—I guess you'll do," he then said. "The door of this room is locked; no one can hear

anything said here. Sit down, Mr. Gunn; we were bound to meet some time; I preferred it should be at my invitation. What will you drink?—wine?—spirits?"

"Nothing, till we've done our business. A cigar I wouldn't mind."

The banker opened a cupboard in the writing-table, and put a box of cigars within his guest's reach. He then took one himself, and lighted it. He half sat on the edge of the table, and smoked a whiff or two; then he laid down the cigar in the ash-receiver. He had become conscious of a strange, tumultuous life welling up in him. It forced him to vibrate in unison with itself; it shook his heart and his lungs, so that his breathing was disturbed. He was grotesquely reminded of how water bubbles in a vacuum; so he, the pressure of orthodox and moral atmospheres being removed, was aware of a spiritual effervescence or exhilaration, not to be entirely concealed. He paced slowly up and down the room, forcing himself to measure his paces, and subdue the impulse to throw out his limbs violently, and to shout aloud. He tried to steady himself by glancing at the familiar contents of the room; but the aspect of all things seemed changed, disordered, and even unreal. He glanced at his own figure in a looking-glass, and was surprised to behold the decorous, succinct evening dress, and the neatly-trimmed beard and accustomed countenance; he did not know what he expected to see; but he felt that this image and himself were ridiculously dissimilar. Outrageous conceptions rioted in his mind, and words of abandoned license stuttered for utterance on the tip of his tongue. Why not utter them? He had summoned a congenial companion; let the foul flood rush forth! But he feared to do this; he had not gaged the limits of this new spirit that had entered into him; it might rend and destroy him. He must keep control of the rudder, no matter whither he steered. He found himself again standing in front of Dexter Gunn, who sat immobile, smoking his cigar. It

seemed to him that years had elapsed since he last spoke to the man. He put forth all his strength, and crushed down the symptoms of insurrection within himself. But when he spoke, his voice sounded in his ears like that of a stranger.

"You've done time, of course, Mr. Gunn," he said, grinning between his teeth. "You know the inside of 'Copper John's'? Probably think you know what solitary confinement with hard labor means? Well, you don't know anything about it; but I know it. I was sentenced fifty years ago, and this is the first hour of liberty I've had ever since! What's more, if all comes out right, it'll probably be the last. It's you let down the bars, and after you've gone, they'll put themselves up again."

"You're a bit nervous, Mr. Allingham; it'll wear off," said Gunn, in his low monotone. "Maybe, if we talked business, it would quiet you down."

The banker forced himself into a chair. The paroxysm was abating a little.

"Of course, I did all my thinking before sending for you," he remarked, after a while. "There'll be no explanations, or sentiment, or rot of any sort. I suppose you've guessed what I want of you?"

Gunn made a movement with his thick eyebrows, but remained silent.

"We can speak out, you know," rejoined the other, with a sneering inflection. "Understand, you're in no danger here; and neither am I. Go straight from me to the captain of the precinct, if you like, and tell him all I shall tell you; I shall deny it, and it will be the word of Dexter Gunn, expert bank-burglar, against bank-president James Thorpe Allingham's, the most respected citizen of Pennborough. On the other hand, we can be of use to each other. There's the situation, in two words."

"What can I do for you, Mr. Allingham?"

The banker hated the formal address; he would have liked his companion to call him "Jim," and slap him on the shoulder; yet he was a man

with whom no one had ever ventured to take a liberty. But he was tuned to other music now.

"I want you to rob the Roystone Bank!" he said, letting his voice out harshly.

"Steady!" said Gunn, coldly. "We don't shout in our profession. You'll find etiquette everywhere, Mr. Allingham. I follow my business; but I try to be respectable, in my way. I do what's necessary—no more and no less. I know a little about banks and bankers; you and I are after the same thing, only on different lines. But once in a while you get caught foul, and then you . . . May I put a question?"

"Go ahead!"

"You're insolvent, of course; speculated with the funds, and they're gone; mortgaged your house and furniture; owe three or four times what you can pay. Blinds will be up in another week. All right. Then why don't you skip, in place of calling in me?"

Allingham laughed. "Oh, I've a wife and daughter; and I expect to be a father-in-law next Fall. Besides, I don't care to be beat; I mean to carry on here."

Gunn meditated a moment. "The young lady and gentleman I saw through the door just now?"

The fire reddened through Allingham's eyes. "They're not what we're here to discuss," he said, angrily.

"I'll be the judge of that," returned the other, impassively. "If you care for the girl, or for anybody else, it's an element of risk. If she should suspect anything, and come at you wheedling, maybe you'd give the thing away."

Allingham reflected, and controlled his temper; but a satanic expression twisted across his face. "A risk?" he chuckled. "Well, take it or leave it! If I didn't care for her, you wouldn't be having the biggest chance of your career. Do you think I look so soft?"

"That isn't the trouble with your kind, Mr. Allingham," replied Gunn. "I've seen some of your sort before. When you go crooked, the danger is

of your going too far—until you get used to it. Is this your first job?"

An irrational fury flamed up in the banker; his muscles grew tense, as if for a spring. But he realized his own irrationality, and finally replied, quietly but sardonically: "Oh, Mr. Gunn, you flatter me! No, I'm a virgin."

Gunn meditated again. "I don't like the looks of it over well. What is there in it for me?"

"There's a hundred and sixty-five thousand in the safe to-day," answered Allingham, now finding himself speaking more naturally. "If you can get to it, that's your wages. You must chisel it open, or blow it open, of course; there must be no doubt about the robbery. Then you'll get credit for having taken a couple of millions, and the bank for having lost that amount. I shall call a directors' meeting, and they will vote to make good. How does all that commend itself to your judgment?"

"Does anybody except you and me know of the scheme?" Gunn inquired. "Your Mr. Calverly, for instance?"

"Calverly? You've studied us up a little, I see! But you evidently don't know Calverly. No, if I could have talked to any one else, I wouldn't be talking to you. My rope was a long one, but I've come to the end of it, and I don't mean to hang myself with it. I'd heard of that New York adventure of yours, a year or two ago; and—well, here we are!"

"That's all right. But I could tell you of a banking man, as it might be yourself, being caught like you are, gets a young clerk of his to grab a few hundreds, and skip over to Canada. The bank gives out he got into them to the tune of as many hundred thousand, the directors pony up, and the clerk is taken care of. That's one way. But if your Mr. Calverly isn't that kind of a sport, it wouldn't work."

"And it counts for nothing, from your point of view, that the plan involves the ruining of a clerk; whereas mine only gives a crook another oppor-

tunity to be crooked?" added Allingham, sarcastically.

"Why, as for that, Mr. Allingham," said Gunn, some overt insolence creeping for the first time into his tone, as he folded his hands before him, and held his cigar between his teeth, "if you measure the bank-presidents and the bank-burglars up against each other, I don't know but what you'd find, of the two sorts of crooks, that the bank-presidents were as bad as the burglars, and a good bit meaner and more cowardly. We do our jobs, under the noses of the cops, and we keep ourselves to ourselves, or we get juggled, as may be; you live in your houses and do the society fling, while all the time you're picking the pockets, not only of the rich folks that come to your parties, but of the poor tradesmen whom you're too refined to allow among your acquaintances. And if the cops, or the judges, get wind of you, you know how to fix them; you don't take the chances we do. I'll tell you another thing, Mr. Allingham—and you may as well sit tight and hear me, for I'm your master at any game you can put up in this room to-night, and I don't have the chance every night to chat sociably like this with a gentleman of your standing and intelligence—as I was saying, there's your daughter, a nice-looking young lady, and good, I make no doubt, and going to get married to a nice young doctor, and both of 'em thinking the world of you. Now, I'm called a bad man, and I don't say otherwise, and if you corner me when I'm cracking a crib, and there's no other way out, I'd kill you all in the day's work, and think no more of it. But I saw you to-night, coming from that girl to me, and she kissing her hand after you; and when we're through with our business, you'll go back to her and kiss her good night; and all the while, you're a thief and a crook, with no more right to her good thoughts—barring that you're her father—than I have. You've lived on velvet all your life; been to college, most likely, and had the pick of the best right along from the start. I'm a crook, and have

lived with crooks, and if I've education enough to talk straight, I can thank myself for it. But if a young lady like your daughter was to look and act and feel toward me as she does to you, I should feel queer—I wouldn't want to stand for it. I'll tell what you don't know, and maybe won't believe, but it's truth just the same, we crooks put a limit—we draw the line; it may be low down, but it's there. But a gentleman that goes crooked, like you, Mr. Allingham, draws no line at all; he's rotten clear through, lock, stock and barrel. And between you and me, sociably, here by ourselves, that's what I take you to be. So," added Gunn, taking his cigar from between his teeth, and knocking off the ash into the receiver, "when you talk about the shame of corrupting a poor innocent clerk, and preferring to hire a professional like me, I say to myself, 'This is from the gentleman who feels nothing queer in setting up his rottenness on a pedestal for a good young girl and her intended to worship and fondle and take into their hearts, and giving it out to the folks he's robbing that he's the innocent victim of the robbery.' And that's why I don't take your rebuke so hard as I might otherwise, Mr. Allingham. I shall take on this job, for, as you say, that amount don't often come my way so easy; but if things were to go wrong with you after this, and you came into the profession as a regular, my sort wouldn't want to work with you; you'd have to go down among the pickpockets, if they'd have you. Well, I believe that lets me out."

During the few minutes while Gunn was speaking, Allingham passed up and down a gamut of emotions. A burglar was taking an authoritative tone with him, was criticizing him in an insulting and degrading manner, and was actually reading him a sort of moral lecture. The banker's sense of humor bade him laugh in mockery; his masculine instinct challenged him to resent the attack physically; but in both directions he found himself met by an unfamiliar and alarming im-

tence. Hitherto in his career he had been the master or leader of his associates; but now, having abandoned his own ground for another's, he had found a master in him. The late exhilaration of defying old boundaries had unmasked itself as the fatal inherent weakness of the criminal, increased by that criminal's desire to retain his social prestige. The romance of evil had quickly been replaced by its debasing ugliness. His shield of society was lost, his sword of character blunted, and without these he discovered that his personal equation was helpless. He could do nothing. He dared not even—now that it had gone so far—discontinue the negotiation. Possibly, however, he might find a way to revenge himself secretly or indirectly; and it was with this undefined hope that he went on. His brains at least were left him, and the resource of the defeated—dissimulation.

"You have the best of the argument, Mr. Gunn," he said, pleasantly. "I'm in a hole, and I'm willing to sacrifice anything to get out—except one thing—my social standing, and I regard that mainly for the sake of persons dear to me. No doubt, your position in the matter is more decent than mine; anyhow, you're the man to help me through, and I think the price for your services ought to satisfy you."

Gunn assented with a movement of the lips. "What about the details?" he added.

"I'll give you keys to the doors of the building, and I'll see that the night-watchman is out of the way. You must look after the policeman on the beat yourself; he's an Irishman. The safe you must tackle for yourself; the worse you wreck it the better. As for the time, to-morrow night would suit me."

Gunn took his hat and stood up. "One hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars, you said?"

"There may be a few drafts or deposits to-morrow; but that is about what you'll find there."

Gunn looked him in the eyes for a moment. The banker divined the significance of that look, and it roused a helpless fury in him. But he smiled.

"I'll have to take your word for it," said Gunn, at length, and he turned to go.

"You must drink a glass of wine with me now," said Allingham, bringing a bottle out of the cupboard. He filled two glasses, and lifted his. Gunn did the same; the glasses touched. They drank, and again looked at each other.

"That's good stuff," Gunn remarked, as he set down his glass. "If all goes right, I shall go South after this; you won't hear of me in the profession again. I've had enough. That girl of yours will be the better for this job—but don't let her know!"

"Good luck to you!" said Allingham. He stood twisting his pointed beard, and smiling; he was ready to shake hands, should Gunn offer it. But the latter again turned, and put his hand on the handle of the door. Allingham accompanied him into the hall.

"Papa!" called Olympia's voice, from the drawing-room, "won't your friend come in and have a cup of tea with us?"

"Will you come? Why not?" said Allingham, laying a hand on the other's arm.

Gunn shook the hand off, with a low, surly laugh. That laugh humiliated and enraged Allingham more than anything else that had passed between them that evening. He thought it meant, "And you pretend to care for her!"

As Gunn descended the steps to the street, an unobtrusive, round-shouldered figure passed him, and glanced into his face with a pair of deep-set, steady gray eyes. It was Calverly, who often thus patrolled the sidewalk at night before the house where lived the girl he loved. Gunn gave him no attention, and walked off in the opposite direction. But many years' training at the cashier's window had given Calverly the faculty of quickly stamping a face on his memory, and, though

without suspicions, he never forgot that grim countenance.

IV

IN the Arabian fairy-tale, the prince, setting out to journey toward the object of his desire, is attended by two servants, one white, the other black. The former tries to dissuade him from his purpose, assuring him that harm awaits him; the other removes all the obstacles interposed by the first, and whispers to him of gain and pleasure. Between the two, the prince is left free choice; and his choice is evil.

It is an old and a true wisdom that confesses that the path to good is never closed to man, and that in the deepest temptations he is wooed, by all means that do not involve his freedom of action, to take it. Love and honor wooed Allingham during that evening, and the day following. It seemed as if Olympia had never clung so close to him, had never expressed such trust in him and pride in him; at times he could almost have believed that she was acting with knowledge of what impended. She was accustomed to serve his breakfast to him alone in the mornings, Mrs. Allingham rising late; and she spoke of her feeling that love was the greatest thing in the world, and that she and Stephen Bentinck had been telling each other that they meant to do without help from him in their married life, and that the thought of comparative poverty made them happy, because it would keep them more livingly conscious of each other's loving presence and support. "Oh, a few thousand dollars to square the bills at the year's end won't do love any harm, you'll find," returned her father, with an effort to maintain his customary air of good-humored sarcasm; but the girl put her arms round his neck and said, "No, father; I think we think too much of money, or the kind of good it gives us. It does not make us happy. I think you are not always happy, papa, though you have so much money. I love you with all

my heart, but I would love you more if you were poor."

This pure, unselfish atmosphere stifled him. He put her away, laughing between his teeth, and went earlier than usual to the bank. There he found a couple of the directors waiting for him, and for a moment his heart stopped, but they had come to remind him that this was the twenty-fifth anniversary of his conduct of the bank, and that the board of directors requested his presence at a reception that night, when a testimonial of their esteem and confidence would be presented to him. The two gentlemen were very cordial and cheerful, and at parting wrung his hand with most friendly heartiness. "Till to-night!" said they, and he nodded brightly, and thought, "To-night!" Then a voice, so clear that he started at it, seemed to say in his ear, "Confess all to them now—quick, before they are gone!" But he hardened himself, and stood, panting; and it was too late.

At the noon hour, he sent out for some luncheon, deciding not to go home, and presently there was a knock at his room door, and, at his sharp and nervous, "Come in!" Calverly entered. He said, with some hesitations and embarrassed hiatuses, that he cared more for the honor and credit of the bank, and of those concerned with it, than for anything else; that his salary was more than sufficient for all his wants; that he had, indeed, laid by a considerable sum, which had been increased by fortunate investments, and now amounted to about twenty thousand dollars; that he was aware this was relatively an insignificant amount, measured by the financial standards of the bank, but that sometimes even a little space might bridge the distance between safety and danger; that he had not been able to rid himself of the notion that some danger existed; in fact, that certain facts and rumors which had come to his knowledge within the past day or two had led him to apprehend that the bank might even be threatened by some peril from without; and that—but at this point Al-

lingham impatiently broke in upon him.

"For mercy's sake, Calverly, what ails you? Do you know me so little as to come to me with rumors and hearsay? Aren't you satisfied with fancying the bank is going insolvent, but you must now think we're going to be burglarized?—for I don't know what else you can be hinting at. And what's this about your savings. I almost believe you are going to offer them to me to fill the gap your imagination has created? Is that it?"

The cashier reddened painfully, but the intensity of his feeling gave him power to go on. "Please don't be offended, Mr. Allingham; I meant no disrespect or impertinence. The one satisfaction I can have in this world is to be of service to you and yours. Let me pay in this small sum to the credit of the bank. It can do no harm, and it might—it might——"

Allingham interrupted with his mocking laugh; but he saw that the time had come when he must lie, not merely constructively or indirectly, but precisely and definitely. "There, you're a good fellow, and I appreciate it, and all that," he said; "but—sit down here; we'll have this thing out once and for all. I haven't told you this before, because, to be frank with you, it's none of your business; but just in confidence, between you and me, here it is. I have in this drawer"—he laid his hand upon an inner receptacle of his desk—"something like two and a half million of gilt-edged securities, as good as bullion, or better, and this afternoon I shall, with my own hands, put them in the safe and lock them up. The bank has been engaging in large enterprises lately, and I can understand your uneasiness, but we have been especially favored by—well—in some very high quarters indeed, and to-day we are in better shape than we have ever been before. I don't say we're safe, simply; I say we're absolutely invulnerable. Look here, Calverly, I ought to be fired out of office for taking you into my confidence like this—even the directors

don't know the facts—so I'm at the mercy of your discretion! But that face of yours makes me really unhappy. Do, now, for pity's sake, shorten it up again, and come to dinner to-morrow—Stephen is to be in New York, I believe, at a meeting of the Medical Society—and let me hear you talk of something else than my insolvency and your savings! Now get out of here, and leave me to my luncheon."

So that was over, and the banker's spirits revived. He felt strong enough to face the event that was at hand. Heaven had appealed to him on all sides and had been rejected, and he was now attuned to receive advances from an opposite direction.

Calverly, meanwhile, though once more somewhat comforted by Allingham's assurances, could not rid himself of a certain disquiet, occasioned not so much, now, by fears for the financial stability of the Roystone Bank, as by some reports which had reached his ears relative to the suspected presence in town of two or three suspicious characters. The tale had come to him in a roundabout way; an acquaintance of his in an insurance office had told him that he had heard from a friend of his in a detective agency that some well-known crooks had recently left for Pennborough, from New York. The story might not be true, or it might mean nothing, and Calverly had not had the courage to repeat it explicitly to Allingham, but he could not prevent it from haunting his mind. Thus it happened that, near midnight of that pleasant Summer night, his uneasy spirit drove him forth from his lodgings and led him down Walton street, on which the Roystone Bank stood. There was no moon, and soft clouds were drifting in masses across the sky. The bank stood next door to an old brick building, which had been recently vacated by the tenant, and was to be torn down; there was a small courtyard in the rear of it, into which opened a back-door of the bank. A person leaving the bank by this exit, and crossing the yard, could reach the

neighboring cross street through a short alleyway.

A private night-watchman had his post in this region, and there was also a policeman who covered it in his beat every ten or fifteen minutes. After standing in front of the bank for a while, Calverly was surprised to note that neither of these protectors of property made his appearance. At this juncture, the steps of a man walking swiftly were audible coming down Walton street, and the figure became visible rapidly approaching. As he came up, he slackened his gait, and he and Calverly mutually recognized each other. It was Stephen Bentinck, returning home from a professional call.

"Mr. Calverly!" he exclaimed. "Is it a bad conscience, or need of fresh air, that drives you abroad at this hour?"

His full, pleasant voice was welcome in the cashier's ears, for though the young physician was to marry the girl that Calverly loved, the latter's honest heart had never borne him a grudge, and had always recognized his manly and winning qualities.

"I feel uncomfortable about the bank, Dr. Bentinck," he said, in tones that faltered a little. "I heard that there was a party of thieves come to town; the night-watchman and the patrolman are both absent, and I can't help thinking there may be something wrong."

Bentinck gave him a frank, penetrating look and smile.

"You don't mean you think there are burglars in there now?"

"I was thinking that perhaps I would as well step in and see, doctor."

"In that case, hadn't you better let me come with you?" said Bentinck. "Two knights-errant are better than one, in such a case, and I used to be good at a scrap when I was in college. Have you got the keys? Come on!"

"Well, I'm sure it's very kind of you, doctor," replied the cashier. "Of course, I suppose it's only my foolishness, but, if you don't mind, I suppose it can do no harm." And so saying, he unlocked the door of the bank, and he and Bentinck entered.

V

DEXTER GUNN had made his dispositions with the prudence and circumspection of an experienced general. The watchman had been disposed of, as agreed, by Allingham; the policeman, Tom MacBride, had been beguiled away by a smart-looking young Irishman, who wished to consult with him as to the best way to get on the force. The aspirant had money, and seemed anxious to spend it, and MacBride and he spent several very important hours in the back parlor of a neighboring hostelry. The outside coast being thus cleared, Gunn, with a single assistant, waited his opportunity to get into the bank unobserved, and immediately set to work on the safe. It was an imposing-looking fortress, but, as the burglars saw at a glance, not built according to the latest ideas in safe-architecture. Nothing would be needed beyond the screw and the jack; the men worked hard and eagerly, sweat pouring from their faces in the confined room, for burglary keeps both body and mind on the stretch. In less than fifteen minutes, the massive door yawned open, and before them lay fortune, and a life of ease and comfort in Mexico or Chili.

"This is too easy!" muttered Gunn's companion, wiping his forehead. "Seems almost a shame to take the money!"

"Get hold of it first," Gunn answered. "I don't half believe in that silver-headed old scoundrel, yet!"

For the next few minutes no words were spoken; the two men were busy opening drawers and boxes and pulling over bundles of papers. There were documents enough, but as yet neither negotiable bonds nor bank-notes.

"Here's three hundred in fives, to begin with!" exclaimed the pal, tearing open a small package, and running over the contents between his thumb and finger.

"Three hundred!" returned Gunn, in a grim whisper. "Where's the rest of it?"

Once more they pursued their search, with growing dismay and rage. In a short time, the big safe stood empty. Everything in it had been examined in vain. There was nothing else of value—nothing! Three hundred dollars was the total of the booty!

As the men realized this, they stared in each other's faces. The pal uttered a curse. Gunn rose to his feet.

"It was a clever trick, Mr. James Thorpe Allingham," he said, in a very gentle voice. "But it will cost you something, and that I promise you." He brushed the dust from his hands and trousers, and began to pick up the tools. "You're having your health drunk at the directors' meeting at this minute. I'll give you blood to drink before you get home."

"They're on to us!" cried the other, hoarsely in his throat, making a leap to close the door of the partition; but he was not in time.

Stephen Bentinck, supple and athletic, had his shoulder against the panel, and exerting his strength, forced the door back against the burglar. The latter aimed a blow at him with the jimmy; Stephen evaded it, and it struck Calverly, who was close behind, a glancing blow on the head, knocking him down and partly stunning him. The fellow turned and fled through the back entrance, and so out through the yard and alley, leaving Dexter Gunn to shift for himself.

"Do you resist arrest?" demanded Stephen. His eyes glowed, his kindly, handsome face was alight, the blood of battle was singing in his veins. His heart was steeled for a struggle, but far in the depths of it was the image of Olympia, and his love for her.

"Keep clear of me, young fellow," said Gunn, quietly. "It's not you I wish to hurt. Let me go peaceably. There's been no harm done here."

Stephen, confident in his skill as wrestler and boxer, stepped warily forward. Then he saw Gunn's hand move toward his pistol pocket, and leaped at him. They strained together for a few moments; Gunn was far the stronger, but Bentinck had the

science of the game. There was a sudden twist and whirl, and the burglar was down, with Bentinck on top of him. His hands were on Gunn's windpipe; and the latter, at the same moment, saw Calverly rising unsteadily to his feet. Gunn's right arm, as he fell, had been twisted under his back. With a furious heave of his body, he got it out, and found his revolver.

"Let me out!" he growled.

"You're my prisoner," panted Stephen.

Then the burglar pressed the mouth of the revolver against the other's heart, and fired. Stephen held himself up for an instant, then fell, relaxed, across his antagonist's body. Gunn rolled him to one side, and rose. Calverly, uttering a cry, staggered toward him. Gunn, with a sidewise swing of the foot, knocked the cashier's legs from under him, and he fell headlong. With a gloomy glance at the body of his other assailant, he turned and passed out.

Calverly, dragging himself dizzily to his knees, found himself alone with the dead. He shook his head confusedly from side to side.

"Why couldn't he have killed me!" he groaned. "I knew him—I knew him! and oh, God, now I know it all!"

VI

IN Allingham's overcoat pocket, as he walked home from the reception at half-past twelve that night, was a golden salver, beautifully wrought, with an inscription testifying to the honor and esteem in which his friends held him. It was to be handed down as an heirloom to the latest generations of his happy posterity. Allingham had appeared in excellent spirits and form that evening, and had made one of his wittiest speeches in response to the address of the donors. Now, as he stepped briskly down the elm-shadowed street, he glanced at his watch. Was that job at the bank accomplished yet? On an impulse of characteristic audacity, he determined

to go home by way of the bank—it was not much further—and have a look at the building. He turned down Webster street, and soon came to the northeast corner of Walton. A man was walking rapidly away from him, down the side street from the bank. It was Dexter Gunn, but Allingham could not recognize him at that distance. Had Gunn happened to walk in the other direction, the two men would have met, and Gunn was in a murderous mood. But fate had arranged things otherwise.

As Allingham came opposite the bank, he paused a moment, and eyed it curiously. Had his friends the burglars yet discovered the trick he had played upon them? It had been played on the spur of a moment—an inspiration to pay off the grudge against the fellow who had insulted him. Gunn would have to swallow his medicine; he would dare make no complaint. Meanwhile, the money thus stolen from the thief could be usefully applied to his own expenses during the coming few weeks of turmoil and excitement. He chuckled to himself. The bank appeared quiet and undisturbed, and Allingham walked on. At that moment, Calverly, within, was summoning energy to grope his way out from the wrecked safe and the dead body, and give the alarm. But before he could do this, Allingham had passed out of hearing.

On reaching home, he let himself in softly, and went to his room. For some hours he was wakeful, thinking of the immediate future, and preparing the rôle he would have to play. There would be much vain hue and cry, meetings of the directors, great sympathy and condolence; finally, reorganization, and himself as president once more. It would be rather amusing. Then, in the Fall, Olympia's wedding. Perhaps, after they had started on their wedding journey, he himself would slip away for a few months' vacation in Europe, to rest himself from the shock and fatigue of the calamity. There was a smile on the banker's face as he fell, at length, into a heavy sleep.

Olympia, who always rose early, was awake sooner than usual this morning. She went out on the front porch, to smell the roses that clambered over the trellis, and with a hope in her heart, too, that Stephen might be passing—as he sometimes did—and then they would exchange a kiss and a few words, and she would give him the loveliest of the roses.

She selected and plucked the rose, but Stephen did not come. Presently, however, the newspaper-boy came hurrying up the drive, with papers under his arm. As he caught sight of Olympia, he gave her a strange, frightened glance, tossed a paper to her feet, and then set off again at top speed.

Amused at his aspect and behavior, she picked up the paper, and smoothed it out, ready for her father's perusal; he liked to have her bring him the morning paper. As the poor girl opened it, the black headlines, crowding across the top of the first page, caught her eye. She read them, and became very still.

Something must be wrong with her eyes—with her head. She had never before been affected in this way. Her arms, too, seemed like lead, and her fingers were numb. With an effort, she lifted the paper once more, and again fixed her eyes on the page. How the words danced! She could not make them stand still. She remained staring at them a long time.

At last, with a low, whimpering cry, she stretched out her arms, and murmuring: "Stephen—papa—help—help me!" she turned to reënter the open door. On the threshold she fell prone, with the rose in her bosom, and the paper open beside her.

Allingham sat in his study, and Calverly stood before him. A week had passed since the robbery of the Roystone Bank. The inquest, at which Calverly had given testimony, had taken place; the police had begun their futile pursuit of the murderer; Stephen Bentinck's funeral had been held, and now the former cashier and the presi-

dent faced each other in an interview which the former had requested.

"Sit down, won't you, Calverly?" said Allingham, in a dull, indifferent voice. "You know I don't see callers now, but I made an exception in your case, because . . . I suppose you've come to ask about the reorganization. That's a question for the directors to settle. I presume it will take place ultimately. I'm not able to think of these matters at present. Mrs. Allingham has been laid up ever since—and Olympia . . . I'm anxious about her . . . But, sit down."

"I'll stand, if you please, Mr. Allingham," replied the cashier. "I have some statements to make to you—some statements which I ought to make to you, I think—which I did not think it right to make at the inquest."

"Oh, I have nothing to do with that," said Allingham, wearily. "You should go to the chief of police. I am making no investigations."

"I should say, in the first place," continued Calverly, not noticing the banker's words, "that whether the bank resumes or not, I sha'n't be in it any more."

"Really? Well—oh, you want a recommendation? All right, I'll—"

"I want nothing from you, Mr. Allingham. I—" his voice failed him, but after a pause he went on—"I want to speak of the night before the robbery. You had a caller here that night. You received him in this room, alone."

There came a singing in Allingham's ears, and a sensation of nausea; his nerves had been failing him of late. He could not keep a faintness out of his voice as he replied: "Was there? Did I? Possibly; I often see persons here. What—?"

"I was passing the side door into the street as he came out. I saw his face, Mr. Allingham—I saw it distinctly. I could not have forgotten it in years. But it was only a little over twenty-four hours when I saw him again. I knew him! Oh, I knew him!"

An irrepressible tremor, which he strove to disguise by grasping the arms of his chair, passed through Allingham's body. "You saw him—?"

"I recognized him as he stood up after shooting Dr. Bentinck through the heart. I could have begged him to shoot me. For I understood it all then; and I'd rather have been dead. I had always believed in you, and looked up to you. Oh, my God!"

The passion that trembled hoarsely in his usually mild and subdued tones rang through the room, and struck cold on the banker's heart. But the innate courage of the man rose, after a few moments, to meet the deadly emergency. He sat erect in his chair.

"Let us understand each other, Calverly. I comprehend your insinuation. What do you intend to do? Do you wish to profit by this information—this—?"

The cashier put up his trembling hands. "Oh, Mr. Allingham—oh, Mr. Allingham! Nothing you've ever known of me gives you the right to make that suggestion. I pretend to have no evidence that could be used against you in law; but if I had, what would be the difference? No law that man has made can punish you. You and I and that murderer know what you are, and what you've done; no one else will ever know it. You are her father—you are her father, Mr. Allingham. She must never suspect—she must always believe in you. I would kill you myself, rather than she should suspect. But I felt it was right that you should know that I know you. I couldn't keep it to myself—I had to tell you. The murderer must escape; if he were captured, the truth would come out. You must protect the man who killed your daughter's husband that was to be. You must go through life being honored and trusted by everybody, for her sake. You mustn't commit suicide, Mr. Allingham, for that would be confession. Every night and every morning, you must let that girl put her arms round your neck and kiss you, and believe in

you, and you must pretend that you deserve it. What is the use of our talking about human law? What could human law ever do to you, Mr. Allingham, to be compared with what you've done to yourself? You are dead and in hell already, and yet you must live, and make that angel believe that you are worthy to be her father."

He stopped abruptly; and the emotion which had given fire to his dull eyes and dignity to his homely and common features dropped from him like a prophet's mantle. He seemed visibly to dwindle and grow cold.

"That's all, I think, Mr. Allingham," he said, uncertainly. "I don't quite know what I've said; but I believe that is all. I shall remain an inhabitant of this town, for I don't wish to be where she couldn't reach me, if she needed my help. But you won't see any more of me, Mr. Allingham, so I bid you good day."

He had moved away, and got to the door, when Allingham spoke.

"Good-bye, Calverly. I've always thought you a poor, feeble creature,

and despised you. But some power, greater than we are, has given it to you to put me to shame and crush me down. You're quite right about it all. I'm glad you found me out, too. It's a comfort to have one human being know that I'm a hypocrite, and a coward, and a scoundrel. I'd have gone cracked, otherwise, I believe. Good thing that you're going to stay in town. I shall look you up once in a while, just to feel that you know me still. Yes, it'll be a hard job to keep that halo of mine in commission; but I promise you I'll do it, till it kills me. Well, good-bye."

Mr. Allingham survived his honors and prosperity three years more; he seemed a very old man when he died. When death came, he met it with a smile that was almost a laugh. His wife and daughter are still living, much devoted to charities. Calverly calls on them occasionally; they see very little of society. In Olympia's room are pictures of her father and of Stephen Bentinck, and she always keeps fresh flowers blooming before them.



LIGHTS

I'D seen the golden sunlight robe
The world with splendor rare;
I only knew its gladness when
I saw it in your hair.
I'd watched the moonlight kiss the sea
And bathe the sleeping land;
I only knew its beauty when
It gleamed upon your hand.

I'd seen the faint, wan starlight work
Its miracle of grace;
I only knew its softness when
It shone upon your face.
I'd watched the lovelight dawn with smiles,
I'd watched it pale with sighs;
I only knew its sweetness when
I found it in your eyes.

RICHARD STILLMAN POWELL.

THE COLUMBINES

WE are the Columbines who, night by night,
 Dance for your pleasure in the garish light,
 Red-lipped, with swift, white feet that know no pause,
 With laughter over-loud and eyes too bright,
 To win your listless, cynical applause.

We are the Columbines to whom you call
 For jest and merriment and carnival,
 Buying our gladness at the market price,
 Tossing the careless coin to one and all,
 Scorning the purchase with a wit too nice.

We are the Columbines who may not grieve,
 Whom no man asks to pardon or believe,
 Who have no tears, no sorrow, no regret—
 A mimic Juliet you kiss and leave,
 The rose of yesterday you soon forget.

We are the Columbines who sometimes turn
 To watch your windows where the home lights burn,
 Feeling the woman's shadow on the pane
 Fall on our hearts that take too long to learn
 Their lesson of light laughter, light disdain.

We are the Columbines, life's bubbles blown
 Hither and thither, crimson poppies sown
 For beauty and forgetfulness—no more;
 Ours but to give, never to gain or own,
 To know our poverty and laugh therefor.

We are the Columbines—my masters, see,
 Dance we not well?—laugh we not merrily?
 Beautiful, soulless, blooming but a day,
 Ah, who would not the moment's Pierrot be
 To laugh and kiss—and yawn and turn away!

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



A SERIOUS OPERATION

FIRST M.D.—I operated on old Tightun to-day.

SECOND M.D.—Serious?

"You bet! Don't believe he'll ever get over it."

"What was it?"

"Collected my bill."

DORA NANI

Par Robert Scheffer

FRELE et pâle, dans son inusable robe de deuil, son paroissien à la main, Mme veuve Dolland se dirigeait, selon son habitude quotidienne, vers sa chapelle préférée, quand, au tournant de la rue, une affiche insolite força son regard. Dans la ville de Z..., chef-lieu de troisième classe, tout fait événement. Les distractions y sont rares. Les murs mêmes s'y ennuiant. Une pancarte enluminée qui, d'aventure, égaye leur nudité, est l'objet de commentaires. Mme veuve Dolland s'approcha pour mieux voir. Elle eut un éblouissement; de ses mains tremblantes, le paroissien s'échappa. Péniblement, elle le ramassa; puis, maîtrisant son trouble, se contraignit de regarder encore. Elle avait bien lu :

DORA NANI

et c'était elle, Dora Nani, la tragédienne célèbre, cette grande femme, épaules et gorge nues, mais parées de bijoux, drapant d'une étrange robe couleur de sang caillé ses formes impudiques, dont l'image envahissait le programme...

— L'horrible, l'horrible créature!... murmurait Mme Dolland.

S'éloignant enfin, elle n'alla pas à la chapelle, mais, rentrée dans son pauvre logis, pleura...

Son fils unique était mort pour cette femme. Et voici qu'on allait applaudir, dans la petite ville même où la mère s'était retirée, celle qui lui avait brisé le cœur.

Pourquoi fallait-il que, distraite de ses pensées pieuses, elle eût levé les yeux sur la fatale affiche! Sinon, elle eût tout ignoré, eût continué à vivre, triste, recluse et résignée, et priant pour le salut de celui qui s'était sui-

cidé. Tandis que, maintenant... c'était le passé qui ressuscitait avec ses angoisses, ses révoltes et du désespoir. Et le public acclamerait cette criminelle Dora Nani, ignorant—et s'en soucierait-il, s'il le savait?—que la mère dépossédée versait des larmes à cause d'elle.

Son fils, son unique, comme elle l'avait chéri, tout en tremblant pour lui qui était délicat, impressionnable, excessif de bonne heure dans ses idées, et dans ses actes. Précocement veuve, pour assurer son éducation, elle s'était, souvent, privée du nécessaire. Et, tout en s'effrayant de son esprit aventureux, elle était fière de ses progrès rapides, des éloges qu'on lui faisait de sa jolie mine et de l'intelligence qu'on lui reconnaissait... Puis, c'avait été le départ pour Paris. Oh! comme d'un geste qui implorait, elle l'avait béni, au moment où il la quittait!... Hélas! vite il s'était dévoyé. Au lieu d'études sérieuses, il s'adonnait aux frivolités de la littérature, fréquentait les théâtres qu'il faut réprouver, approchait les créatures de perdition et se liait avec elles... Aux doléances de sa mère, il répondait par des phrases qui la désolaient, sur la brièveté de l'existence, l'incertitude de ce qui suit, l'enthousiasme que provoque la beauté, et affirmait qu'elle seule mérite notre culte. Même, ne la plaignait-il pas de ce que de la vie, elle ne connût que l'austérité et l'inutile devoir, au lieu qu'il faut admirer la lumière qui rayonne, boire la joie qui coule vers nous, s'enivrer de toutes les voluptés que la nature nous prodigue? Si bien avait-il pratiqué ces maximes, qu'entraîné dans le vice, pour subvenir aux exigences de cette Dora Nani, il avait compromis

son honneur, avait volé, avait cherché dans la mort un refuge contre la honte... Mais quelle femme était-ce donc que la Nani, pour qu'elle eût exercé une séduction telle sur le jeune homme, qu'il lui eût tout sacrifié, sa pureté, son honnêteté, sa vie?...

Mme Dolland se le demandait, et l'image tout à l'heure entrevue l'obsédait. Au travers de son affliction, elle se dessinait prestigieuse; elle s'animait, se penchait vers elle, lui chuchotait des paroles. Mme Dolland fit un geste comme pour l'écarter. Derrière ses paupières baissées, elle l'aperçut, plus distincte, et qui la sollicitait. Elle lui faisait signe. Elle murmurait: "Tu n'as qu'à prendre ta place au théâtre. Tu verras, tu sauras, tu jugeras..." Tentation du démon qu'il fallait repousser. La tentation gagnait en force, Mme Dolland faiblissait dans sa résistance. Toute la journée, qui fut longue, la lutte dura.

... Au soir, la veuve, qui avait cru devoir faire un brin de toilette, quelques dentelles anciennes rajoutées aux manchettes et au col, parut, après beaucoup d'autres, au guichet. Le prix du strapontin lui parut exorbitant; elle le paya, avec des remords de ne point faire aumône de cet argent au tronc des pauvres. Et, se promettant de se confesser le lendemain, elle s'achemina, avec des hésitations, vers la salle de spectacle.

La splendeur du lieu l'impressionna. Tout, ici, lui était neuf. Par principe autant que par nécessité, Mme Dolland n'avait jamais visité un théâtre. Elle salua cérémonieusement l'ouvreuse, s'excusa auprès de ses voisins. Intimidée, elle considérait les loges, le lustre, le mystère du rideau baissé. De la musique la charma, en même temps qu'elle l'énervait. Quoique son cœur battît très fort, elle n'éprouvait pas l'émotion douloureuse qu'elle redoutait, plutôt une sorte de curiosité fébrile qu'elle se reprochait: "Mon fils, mon fils, que disait-il?" songeait-elle. Et, furtivement, afin que le ciel lui pardonnât, elle égrenait son chapelet.

Les trois coups retentirent; le ri-

deau se leva. En même temps, un souffle d'air froid se répandit de la scène sur la salle. Mme Dolland frissonna.

Un paysage de féerie se révéla. Aux rayons du soleil couchant, le lac s'empourprait. La colonnade d'un palais blanc en longeait le bord. Sur le degré parut la princesse. La claque faisait tumulte. Attendant le silence, Dora Nani se maintenait dans une attitude modeste, et comme étrangère à l'ovation qu'on lui faisait, perdue dans un rêve, les yeux tristes interrogeant l'espace vide. Ses beaux bras nus émergeaient de la robe blanche où les rayons du soleil agonisant mettaient d'inquiétantes, de rouges lueurs...

Mme Dolland n'avait jamais rien imaginé de pareil. La scène lui apparaissait plus belle qu'une église à l'Adoration. Dora Nani, dans l'auréole de ses légers cheveux blonds, dans sa tunique d'innocence qu'éclaboussait le sang du soleil, était une sainte qui tirait les larmes des yeux.

Mme Dolland s'en voulut de la comparaison. Elle tenta de résister à l'attrait qu'elle subissait. Mais Dora Nani parla. Le timbre de sa voix était grave avec douceur. Cela caressait, cela troublait, cela enchantait. Mme Dolland fut subjuguée. Dora Nani fit quelques pas; l'harmonie de ses mouvements la fit paraître plus belle qu'au repos. Mme Dolland ne la quitta plus des yeux. Aux allées et venues des autres personnages, au dialogue, à peine si elle prêtait attention. Tout l'intérêt de la pièce se concentrait pour elle dans la seule Dora Nani, et elle l'admirait.

A la chute du rideau, Mme Dolland applaudit... Dans l'entr'acte, elle ne bougea point de sa place. Elle était comme dans un rêve, éprouvait des sensations indéfinissables où de la joie et de l'amertume se confondaient. Il lui semblait qu'elle apprît, maintenant seulement le sens de la vie... Elle se disait: "Mon fils a connu Dora Nani," et elle en concevait une sorte d'orgueil mêlé de douleur.

Aux actes suivants, et, à mesure que

le drame se déroulait, elle s'éprenait davantage de l'artiste. Elle la voyait par les yeux de son fils. Elle croyait entendre celui-ci lui dire: "La beauté, seule, mérite notre culte!" Et, bouleversées toutes ses croyances de naguère, elle l'approuvait...

Aussi, lorsque Dora Nani, pour terminer la pièce, vint merveilleusement expirer en présence du public, Mme Dolland sanglota-t-elle:

— Comme elle doit souffrir! songeait-elle. Sans doute, quand elle meurt ainsi; elle se rappelle celui qui l'aima tant que de mourir pour sa beauté. Et c'est une sorte de châtement qu'elle s'inflige à elle-même, que de fréquemment passer par les affres de l'agonie...

En son âme simple, Mme Dolland pensait ainsi; et il est permis d'en sourire. Mais Mme Dolland ignorait que la vie est une comédie, qu'un peu de tragédie pimente...

Trop fortes avaient été les émotions de la soirée pour que la pauvre femme

pût dormir. Elle ne se coucha même point; mais, dans sa chambrette, très agitée, remémorait ses impressions qui se compliquaient de scrupules.

Elle entreprit d'écrire à Dora Nani. Mais que dire et que ne pas dire? Elle fit des brouillons qu'elle surchargea de ratures. Ses pensées étaient contradictoires. Dora Nani, si belle... son fils... le culte de la beauté... la religion... le devoir... Mme Dolland se perdait dans un monde de réflexion, à mesure que ses sensations s'effaçaient.

A l'aube, elle s'apaisa. Et, ayant tracé sur sa carte de visite cette ligne: *Une mère qui vous pardonne*, elle la mis sous enveloppe, rédigea l'adresse, puis sortit, et jeta la lettre dans la prochaine boîte.

Ensuite, comme la veille, elle se dirigea vers la chapelle; en passant, ne regarda point l'affiche. Et, s'agenouillant devant l'autel, première venue, elle pria fervemment, pour elle-même, pour son fils, pour Dora Nani...



THE VEIL

BELOVED, let my dark hair cover thee—
 Aye, veil thy face from my long-gazing eyes;
 For I am weary as the daylight dies
 Into the shadow—the uncertainty
 Wherein the world is veiled. Be thou to me
 The undiscovered guerdon, the far prize
 That waits the soul's endeavor—till I rise
 At morning and unveil the mystery.

Beloved, as I hide thee in my hair,
 So has my passion covered thee with dream
 And soul-alluring glamour. Wouldst thou dare
 To face my naked spirit in supreme
 And blinding revelation? Oh, beware!
 Love's veils are more essential than they seem.

ELSA BARKER.



VERY EXCLUSIVE

"**M**RS. HIGBLOWER moves in the best society, doesn't she?"
 "Very best; she hasn't a friend in the world."

THE RIFT IN THE LUTE

UPON the cheeks of cherries
 One notes a deepening blush,
 And finds his rustic ferries
 Are fringed with flag and rush.
 Each day more tall and lusty
 My slips and seedlings grow,
 And on the highways dusty
 Are sprinkling-carts, I know.
 The dullest ways of earth are
 Once more replete with grace,
 And mortals full of mirth are—
 For Summer comes apace.

The calamus is budding,
 The locust groves are gay;
 Craft newly-launched are scudding
 About the tranquil bay.
 By noon half town is yawning;
 Fans frequently are priced,
 And golfers 'neath an awning
 Of red sip something iced.
 I heard mosquitos hymning
 To-night, and at the weir
 I saw some boys in swimming—
 Yes, Summer's almost here!

The thirsty sign, "*Cold Soda,*
All Flavors," reappears;
 With ragtime on each road a
 New hurdy-gurdy cheers.
 The sewing-room's all sallies—
 I just glanced in! From piles
 Of smart foulards and challis
 I caught the sweetest smiles.
 But I—I looked my sternest,
 For me what hopes uncloze?
 When Summer comes in earnest,
 Alas! Milady goes!

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



THE TEST

"ISN'T she a lady?"
 "Surely! She works for ten servants."

THE WORLD AT PLAY

By Harold Fielding

THE facts of fun are serious. To explain humor is to spoil it; to define wit is to destroy it. No one has ever constructed a laughable definition of laughter's cause. Other definitions may amuse; this, never. Johnson defined patriotism as the last resort of a scoundrel. So the Irishman, when asked to define his native bull, said:

"Well, when you see thirteen cows lying down in a field and one of them is standing up, that's a bull."

Such ingenuity and humor are not for the explanation of laughter.

The real secret of life is as mysterious in fun as it is in the human body. Yet there are working theories in plenty, though none is complete. The best of these is that which makes humor consist in the discrepancy between the real and the ideal in certain cases. Thus a man is particularly pompous, and struts the street with magisterial mien calculated to awe all beholders. He steps on a bit of orange peel, his hat flies off, his heels fly up, he sits down with tremendous earnestness—and we laugh! He may have broken leg or neck, but our first act is to laugh at him. It is the quick and complete contrast between his present antics and that ideal sedateness and majesty his first appearance had suggested. His performance is funny. It is replete with humorous quality for all except himself.

So much, briefly, for a theory of humor. One is as good as another; none is of any value.

As to wit, it requires the intellectual. Sometimes the feather of wit tickles our ribs with invented humor; some-

times the flash of it lights the mind cheerily, while leaving the body unaffected.

If I were to attempt the making of an original distinction between wit and humor, I should say that wit has its foundation in the mental, while humor is of the senses. But, of a truth, there is no fine distinction between the two, and those that insist most on the divergences between them are they that most confuse us. Wit has its source in the intellect, while humor is generated in the emotions—as so often in surprise; or the two combine, as in a humorous scene where unconscious wit also enters. Thus, the mistress of the house, on entering the dining-room suddenly, found her butler helping himself to a glass of old port.

"James, I *am* surprised," said the indignant lady.

"So be I, mum!" was the answer.

I shall say no more in the way of explanation. One of the saddest books I ever read was entitled, "Why We Laugh." It is enough for our happiness that wit is wit, humor is humor, and that by them is begotten our pet child, laughter, whose charms are constant whenever she nestles in our bosom.

But there is one field where exploration yields certainty. It has been my pleasure incidentally to study the humor of various nations and literatures. In each, one finds some elements common to people everywhere, and one finds, too, other elements that are idiosyncratic, peculiar to the particular peoples. Precisely as we discover the roots of the Latin tongue

among all the Romance languages, with varying forms and idioms in each racial variation, so we observe the foundations of humor everywhere alike, while its object, or its method of exploitation, changes at every frontier. It is said that all jokes are transmutations from seven originals familiar in the times of the Pharaohs. The saying is essentially true. But the world is still deceived by ornament, as Shakespeare has it, so we fix on certain phases of the original fun as distinctive of the country where it is so decked out. And, at the very outset, we learn that, as every individual has his own point of view, so has every nation—in its humor as in all else. The African savages, told by the missionary that the world is round, not flat, roared with laughter. The absurdity of the saying—as they thought it—was most amusing. The religious world of Galileo's time did not laugh when he said the same thing, because, while the statement was equally absurd, it was, too, blasphemous, and the pious were shocked by what they deemed sacrilege. We, in our country, submit to the rule of a president without too many smiles—sometimes, if we are not of his party, almost with tears. But it is said that one emperor of Japan died from laughter because he was told the Americans ruled themselves, without a king over them. The silliness of the idea so tickled the Son of Heaven that he shook with merriment until he shook the soul out of his body. Indeed, we take seriously, as facts of every-day life, many things of which the prophecy would have caused our forebears to explode with derisive chuckles. It is that law of contrast, between the real as we know it and the ideal suggested to us, that amuses, however multifarious the disguises the contrast may assume. For this reason, humor is always individual to the person or the nation. What amuses one amuses another or not, according to whether or not the point of view of the two be approximately the same. The lack of sympathy between nations, in their manner of looking at things, is

the reason why a journalist could never make a good living by translating jokes. Some have tried and—starved.

German humor, for example, is usually profound, of the abstract, metaphysical, having to do with the reason of things. A small boy was walking down Unter den Linden in Berlin, with his mother, when they passed a young ladies' school, out for the promenade. The misses walked two by two in procession. First came the youngest, in skirts to their knees; behind came those a little older, in skirts slightly lengthened; the next were still older, their skirts longer; and so on to the last of the procession, whose skirts reached to the pavement. The little boy gazed inquiringly into his mother's face, and said:

"Mama, why do the girls' legs grow shorter as they grow older?"

Austrian humor is much like the German, but it is not so characteristic.

The Turk, on the other hand, is always moralizing in his jokes—whatever he may be in his serious moments. Witness the famous tale of a neighbor who came to Nasir Eddin, and asked the loan of a rope.

"I have used my only piece of rope to tie up some flour," Nasir answered, blandly.

"But you cannot tie up flour with a rope!" the other urged.

"I can do anything with a rope," Nasir replied, "when I don't wish to lend it."

Again, another neighbor came to borrow Nasir Eddin's ass.

"I am truly sorry," Nasir explained, "but my ass is not here; it has gone to the market."

At this moment, the ass brayed in the stable.

"Hol!" cried the neighbor, "you have spoken falsely. I hear it bray."

"What!" cried Nasir, indignantly, "do you dare to take the word of an ass in preference to mine?"

And here is a Turkish story of which adaptations have gone all over the world:

Eddin put up a sign over a field on

his property, to the effect that he would give the land to any one really contented. When an applicant came, Eddin said:

"O follower of the prophet, art thou really contented?"

And the man answered in the affirmative. Then Eddin dismissed him with the words:

"Since you are really contented, you do not wish my field."

The French, on the contrary, are not given over to moralizing in their wit or in their humor. It is curiously true of the nation that while it abounds in caustic wit and satire, it lacks somewhat in thoroughly wholesome humor. Indeed, I can call to mind but one perfect example of humor undeformed. That was a picture of a trombone-player. The artist shows us a huge man with massive head and an enormous shock of hair. He brandishes his trombone furiously toward a cage in which is seen a canary bird, and he shouts in rage at the tiny biped:

"Oh, thousand thunders! Just as I was about to represent with the velvety notes of my instrument, the soft twittering of birds, you had to interrupt with your infernal din!" The contrast between the fact, and that which the trombonist utters is admirable.

But let us turn to something illustrative of the usual cynical flavor of the French wit. A typical story, that has been adopted into other countries, is that of the preacher in Paris, who said:

"I see in this congregation a woman who has been guilty of disobedience to her husband. In order to point her out, I will fling my breviary at her head."

The priest lifted his book, and every female head instantly ducked.

But much distinctive wit in the French cannot be translated, and it is well that it cannot. The Gallic taste is occasionally like that of a Frenchman, who expressed his admiration for animals in this form of broken English:

"I am zo fond of ze dogs, of ze cats,

of ze 'osses and ze asses; I do love zo much everyt'ing dat ees beastly."

The Dutch are rarely sarcastic. They are, as a rule, rather ponderous in their humor, as they are in the size of their legs. Their wit is as heavy as their faces. Their jokes are as badly cut as their floppy trousers. For two hundred years Holland and Zealand were bitterly at feud over a question that arose between two guests at a banquet. And what do you think was the cause of a strife so bitter? Merely this:

"Does the hook take the cod, or does the cod take the hook?"

Spain lost her wit and most of her humor long before she lost her colonies. Cervantes caricatured all the world of chivalry when he wrote "Don Quixote," but most of all he exploited the grotesque absurdity of the Spaniard himself. In that great work the wit and humor of Spain are forever enshrined. Since Cervantes no Spaniard has had the brains and industry to be very great in wit and humor. The humorous papers of Madrid are the dreariest periodicals in the world.

In Italy, again, there is little of pure fun, though there is an abundance of buffoonery.

We turn with relief to the clean merriment of the three islands of the United Kingdom. Here we find the rollicking fun of Ireland, the staid wit of England, the canny humor of Scotland. It is our custom to laugh at English dullness, but the English are not dull; they are merely different. They are slow sometimes, but very sure. When one comes in close contact with the English, he finds that their wit and humor are at once pervasive and admirable. Some of the best witticisms have come from the badinage of a London cabby, others from the lips of the empire's late prime minister, Lord Salisbury. Often the Englishman is slow to see an American joke, but he is shrewd enough to appreciate his own—and what more would you have? For that matter, we are often slow to see his! We must not think that Irish wit is made up wholly of bulls, that it requires a sur-

gical operation to get a joke into a Scotchman's head, that the English only laugh two weeks after the story is told. Curiously enough, English humor is often of that sort we call distinctly American. When it is not, we may call it dull, but in so doing we are unjust.

We must not expect the English to be quite so abnormally quick as are the Americans. Our national hustle is in our fun as in all things else. We cannot, every one, think alike on so serious a matter as is mirth. Pope said that our sense of humor is like our watches; no two go just alike, but each believes in his own.

Next to American, English humor is the most comprehensive in the world. Often, indeed, it encroaches on America's peculiar field—grotesque and absurd exaggeration. Thus, it was Thackeray, and not an American joker, who described an oyster as so large that it required two men to swallow it whole. Hood, too, though intensely English in his fun, was often given to what are to-day called Americanisms. He declared that a certain woman was so deaf that she might have worn a percussion-cap and have been knocked on the head without hearing it snap. But this quality of English wit is best brought out, in the colonies, where the conditions of life make its resemblance to American drollness more than ever apparent. In Canada it is told that a Bridget went to a clergyman, and asked what was the fee to be married. "A dollar and a half," was the answer. A week later Bridget reappeared, and gave the clergyman the dollar and a half.

"But where is the man?" the clergyman asked.

"What!" cried the dismayed domestic, "don't you find the man for a dollar and a half?"

This sounds like one of our own stories.

Dickens was typically English in his humor; his fun was always without sting. A characteristic story of his, and one not generally known, is of two men about to be hanged, in those days when the executions were in public.

There was a great crowd assembled, when some bullocks, being driven to market, became unmanageable and, rushing through the mass of onlookers, gored persons to right and left.

Ned, on the scaffold, turned to his companion, who with him awaited the fatal drop, and remarked:

"I say, Hal, it's a good thing we're not in that crowd."

Scott abounds in genial merriment. A story of his that I have never seen quoted is of a certain captain who, when he retired on half-pay, instructed his servant to call him every morning at five o'clock, the old hour for parade. He was to say:

"Wake up, sir! It's time for parade, sir!"

Then the captain would half-rouse and reply:

"Damn the parade!" and go happily to sleep again.

I have only one grudge against English wit, and that is its fondness for puns. A poor pun is, undoubtedly, the most despicable of creations. And the pun that is really good is rare. Of puns there are three sorts: the silly, the ingenious and the brilliant. Merely silly *ad nauseam* is the remark of the dog when thrown overboard, "My bark is on the sea!" Or the advertisement of the dealer in musical instruments, who proclaimed, "I have some drums that can't be beat!" Such is Hood's jest anent the stork's standing on one leg: "What is the cause? There is no cause; storks don't caw." Or the story Lord Charles Somerset told on his return from the Cape as to how once a lion came upon him. "I ran at him," averred Lord Charles, "with all my might, and the lion ran away with all his mane."

Something better than punning lies in the retort of an indignant woman to whom a vegetarian proposed marriage.

"Go along with you! Do you think I'm going to be flesh of your flesh, and you a-living on cabbage! Marry a grass widow!"

Puns, howsoever good they may be, never persistently delight. Their charm, if such there be, is evanescent.

All the puns ever made cannot equal the constant worth of one witticism such as *Punch's* famous advice to those about to get married: "Don't!" Or that reply of the woman who, covered with bruises, was taken to a hospital in the East End of London. As she was of the masses, rather than the classes, the house surgeon at once suspected an excess of domestic arguments.

"Who did this?" he asked, pityingly; "was it your husband?"

"No, it warn't my 'usband," the woman made answer. "'E ain't that sort, 'e ain't. W'y, lor' bless ye, 'e's more like a friend nor a 'usband!"

But now, at last, patriotism rejoices, for we come to our own country. Surely, in humor, as in all else, there is no land like to our own. It is the custom to talk of American business men as having no home life, no leisure, no pleasure. We hear often of the card an American puts on his office door: "Gone to lunch—back in five minutes." The foreigner, telling of this, raises his hands in horror and prates of a nation of dyspeptics. He doesn't know the size of the lie on that card! After a thorough examination, I beg to assure the world that the American has more fun and better fun than any other man on the planet.

America is the sole truly cosmopolitan country in the world. We were cosmopolitan in our origin. Italy and Spain joined to give us birth. France fought for our freedom. England gave us her best blood. The Dutch brought their industries to our betterment. And, as the races mingled in our origin, so they have been reinforcing our native strength from that day to this. And, as in all else, so is America cosmopolitan in the making of laughter. Here Finn and Chinaman, Greek and Italian, Magyar and Manxman, and every other folk come freely, and under the blessing of happier conditions make merrier than ever they did at home.

The meditative humor of the German is as familiar here as in Potsdam.

At the funeral of her husband, the widow sighed plaintively, and said:

"If George hadn't blowed into the muzzle of his gun, he might 'ave got a plenty of squirrels—it was such a good day for 'em!"

The moralizing of the Turk is equally our own:

The little girl had been naughty, and her mother bade her pray God that she might be a better girl. The daughter obeyed. When she had finished her usual petition, she added:

"And, O God, please make Nellie a good little girl." Then, with pious resignation, "Nevertheless, Thy will, not mine, be done."

Sometimes we are as cynical as the French.

Thus a man, referring to his first raptures with his wife, said that he had worshiped her, adored her, loved her, so that he would have liked to eat her. "Now," he concluded, after a pause, "I'm sorry I didn't!"

As to puns, too, we are more English than the English. Silly, ingenious and brilliant, we revel in every variety of the play on words. One verse by a popular author runs:

There was a sawyer, blind as he could be,
But otherwise he was without a flaw;
So blind that no one ever saw him see,
But several hundred that have seen him saw.

Exactly like Hood's absurd and inexcusable pun concerning the storks is the question: "How many feet long was the big snake?" Answer: "One hundred and ninety-two inches—snakes have no feet."

Another, more elaborate, tells of one Smith who was a prisoner before the judge.

"What is your name?" asked the judge.

"Smith, your honor."

"Your full name?"

"Locke Smith," replied the prisoner; and, having so said, he made a bolt for the door.

He was brought back, and the judge remarked, decisively:

"Ten dollars, or ten days."

"Thanks," said Locke Smith, "I'll take the ten dollars."

Another illustration is that of the

boy who begged his mother for a kitten-chism, as the catechism was too big for him. But this, though told as original in America, must have had its source in England.

In the same punning vein, one writer insisted that Ruth treated Boaz badly because she pulled his ears and trod on his corn.

Of the jesting on ambiguities in words, where true wit helps the flavor of the punning, a concise and excellent example is this: Two men became engaged in a heated argument. Finally, one of them lost his temper and exclaimed, violently:

"I can't bear a fool!"

"No," the other answered, quietly, "but your mother could."

This biting retort is worthy of Johnson himself.

While we of America are not so persistently amiable as are the English, there is yet no lack of that genial humor wherein is no venom, or, if the venom is there, its object is impersonal and the laughter harms no one. Thus, two well-bred men were abroad in their cups, and unhappily fell into the gutter. After lying there for a time one said to the other:

"I shay, lez go to nuzzer hotel—thish leaks!"

Of another drunkard it is told that when a friend questioned him as to the manner in which he avoided running into the trees of a wood through which he passed nightly on his way home, he replied, convincingly:

"Oh, that is easy. When I look at a tree I see two of them—and then I go right between them."

A housewife examined a Norwegian girl whom the intelligence office had offered as a general servant.

"I suppose you understand plain cooking?" remarked the lady of the house.

"Naw, no cooking," the girl answered.

"Heavy sweeping and housework, then, of course?"

"Naw, doan do housework."

"Perhaps you are a laundress?"

"Naw, doan launder."

"Don't you know plain sewing?"

"Naw, doan sew."

"Well, I declare," exclaimed the distracted lady, "what on earth can you do?"

"Aw," was the astonishing answer, "I can milk a reindeer."

There is, too, the incident of the tramp who called for food at a house where its mistress regarded his nose with evident suspicion. It was a nose of that sort that would not have tended to the safety of its owner in a field where fierce cattle were congregated.

"What makes your nose so red?" the woman asked.

"Mum," the tramp replied, "it's just a-glowin' with pride because it ain't stuck into other folkses' business!" And having so said, he went elsewhere in the search for food.

There was an old lady who expressed her sympathy for the boy who ran the elevator.

"Don't you git awful tired, sonny?"

"Yis, 'm," said the boy.

"What is it that's so tirin'?" was the next question. "Is it the goin' up?"

"No, 'm."

"Is it the goin' down?"

"No, 'm."

"What is it then, sonny, that makes you so tired?"

"It's the questions, 'm."

Clergymen afford even more than their fair share of amusement, without matter as to church or creed. Once, in a church near Poughkeepsie, a very short man was asked to "fill the pulpit," which chanced to be a very large one. This he agreed to do, though only in the technical, not the literal, sense, for the pulpit was far too big for him. In fact, when it came time for the sermon, the congregation could at first see nothing above the desk. At last, however, two eyes and a nose appeared, then a piping nasal voice announced:

"Be of good cheer. It is I; be not afraid."

Children rather more rarely afford entertainment in this class of stories. A little boy was asked by his mother:

"Willy, what would you like to give your cousin Johnny for his birthday?"

"I know what I'd like to give him," Willy replied, without the slightest hesitation, his fist clenched, "but I ain't big enough!"

Often in American humor and wit we find the shrewdest philosophy garbed in clownishness that fills us with laughter. Artemus Ward and Josh Billings said many things that, despite their uncouthness, were pearls of price. There was no lack of pithy sapience in Billings's observation that one hornet, if he feels well, can break up a whole camp-meeting.

Sunset Cox voiced amusingly a most melancholy truth when, after describing the Tartar custom of pulling a man by the ear to make him drink, he added:

"I know a man who doesn't have to have his ear pulled."

And there is a shrewd summary of the weariness inflicted on youth by some classical studies in a farcical anecdote of Homer. The bard was once walking in one of the seven cities in which he was born, when some vulgar little boys ran after him, and jeered at him, and threw sticks and stones at him. This at last so enraged the poet that he withdrew under a horse-shed and wrote the *Iliad*—just to get even!

This story, beyond the quality of which I have spoken, is characterized as well by the grotesque manner. This makes it typically American. I have spoken of Englishmen who excelled in the grotesque—they were exceptions. Here grotesqueness is the rule. Wild absurdity is the characteristic trait of our national humor. It permeates all classes, it thrives in every department of our activity. It is indeed universal, often, alas, wretched. And this habit of exaggeration is rampant in our fun. Many a village wit believes that his every enlargement of the truth is excruciatingly brilliant. It is a perverted taste, but it has many excuses, some that are complete. "Talk of Vesuve," exclaimed the Yankee visitor to Naples, "Niag'll put her out in three minutes." This has a humor of

its own, whether good or bad I care not to specify.

Mark Twain's humor is preëminently of a grotesque character. His mourning over the tomb of Adam is the very ideal of delightful absurdity. Once when lecturing on the Sandwich Islands he proposed to show how the cannibals ate. To that end he requested: "Will some lady kindly loan me a baby?" Again, he signs as a sentiment, with his autograph, "Never tell a lie.—Mark Twain." After the word "lie" is an asterisk and, referring to the bottom of the page, we find this note: "Except for practice."

Even Washington Irving, who was a classicist, could not escape the national manner. It was he who, in speaking of our national vanity, said: "Uncle Sam is of such great weight in his own opinion that he thinks that when he goes West the earth tips up."

The quaint humor of Artemus Ward was always grotesque. Thus, in his story of the accommodation train in the South, notorious for its crawling, he tells us that he at last accosted the conductor with these words:

"Please, sir, may a passenger be permitted to ask a question?"

The conductor assented with a bad grace. Artemus propounded this:

"Why don't they take the cow-catcher off from the engine and put it on the back of this hind car? I want to know what's to hinder a cow at any minute from strolling into the car and biting a passenger?"

Another story on the same subject, from a source unknown to me, is even more exaggerated. The conductor of the slow train approached an old, gray-headed man, and asked for his ticket.

"You've taken it," said the old man.

"Guess not," the conductor declared. "Where'd you get on?"

"I got on at Nachett," the old man replied.

"No, you didn't," was the indignant denial of the conductor. "Nobody got on at Nachett but one little boy."

"Yes," explained the old man, softly;

"I was that little boy."

Yet, extravagant as our American

stories are, and distinctive as such grotesqueness is of our national humor, it is well to remember that this quality of arrant absurdity and exaggeration is found often elsewhere as well. Thus we find in our current American stories old Greek fragments in a new dress. There is a famous play in pseudo-logic wherein an old sophist and his pupil make a contract to the effect that the pupil is to pay the sophist for his instruction when he wins his first suit. The matter was at last brought into court, and formed the pupil's first case. Said the pupil:

"If he wins I must not pay, because, by the contract, I must pay if I win my first suit. If I win I must not pay, by order of the court."

Said the sophist:

"If I win I must be paid, for such is the order of the court. If I lose he must pay, by the terms of our contract."

Out of this story grew, surely, our story of a man's defense when charged with keeping a vicious dog that had bitten the complainant. The defendant's answer was, first the dog by which complainant was bitten was not his dog; because his dog was tied up; second, it was not his dog because his dog had no teeth; third, it was not his dog because he had no dog.

George Eliot once said that a difference in the senses of humor of husband and wife causes a great deal of

domestic unhappiness. The great danger in humor is that one may never know how his neighbor may regard his favorite jest. It is often as disappointing mentally when one makes fun for another as it was physically in the case of the man who, seeing his friend just before him in the street, was moved to advance stealthily and bat his friend's hat down over his ears, only to learn his mistake when knocked down by a stranger.

Fortunately, in this country the average of humor and the average of wit are high. Here is indeed more fun than elsewhere in the world, though there has been a habit of asserting the contrary. And the reason of our abundance lies in the fact that this land is the best of lands. There are two essentials of honest laughter, not false gaiety or scurrilous cynicism, but honest laughter, and those two conditions are fulfilled better here than elsewhere. The two conditions are intelligence and prosperity. The starving man can only laugh in the frenzy of despair; the fool can only giggle in sounds horrible to the ear. Our nation, as a whole, is one of keen intelligences quickened by sufficient education, and it is a nation of workers, whose labor brings them a swift and adequate return. Such men and women may laugh with a clear conscience, and loud and long. The echo of that laughter is one of the overtones of well-being.



HIS CONFESSION

SHE—Tell me, darling, have you ever loved before?

HE—No; but—er—I have—er—experimented a little, now and then.



PHILOSOPHERS tell us that it is useless to argue with a stone. When at a loss for a word, however, half a brick is better than no retort.

A MILLIONAIRE WORM

By James French Dorrance

"YOU'RE a worm, Patrick O'Connor—a crawling, wiggling, wriggling worm!"

A short, puffy, over-fleshed man stood in front of a pier glass, danced up and down, and shook his fist at himself.

"You let a bunch of petticoats run you. You eat their meals; you trot along to their parties; you make up to a lot of snobs you don't care a hang about; you go to the shows they pick out—tommy-rot every time. Why, you even quit being a Democrat because it wasn't fashionable! You're a worm, Patrick—a crawling, wiggling, wriggling worm!"

Again he danced up and down before the glass, once more he shook his fist at himself, and he scowled so that he hardly recognized his usually smiling countenance.

"You bet you are, Patrick," he continued the exciting monologue, "you bet you're a worm! And here is where you turn!" He fairly shouted it. "Here's where you turn! Understand? Turn!"

He was in his private office, and on the edge of his big mahogany desk was a row of push-buttons by which he was supposed to summon his assistants, from office-boy to manager. Because he did not know which helper he wanted first or which button called whom, he pushed them all, pushed them hard, with the push of a determined man who is bent on having his own particular way. Then he waited impatiently.

Five years before, nagged into it by his wife and daughters, Patrick O'Connor, manufacturer of crackers, had retired from the active management of

his affairs. Having no hobbies of his own to ride, knowing little or nothing of the arts, without ambition to rise socially, caring for nothing but business and the making of dollars, he had been a lost man after his retirement. He did not know what to do with himself, and soon became as a putty figure in the hands of the three women of his household. Little by little, he lost even a semblance of authority over them. He was led as though by a ring in his nose.

It was a trifle, an inconsequential thing, that sent Patrick O'Connor into such a rage that he called himself names—nothing more nor less than fourteen million dollars.

He had not lost a fortune of that sum, nor had it suddenly dropped into his coffers. The figures represented the extent of his wealth outside of his working capital, and the fact that he was a very rich man, even as rich men go in these billionaire days, had suddenly entered into his easy-going brain.

This was the one day in the year that the millionaire had any real reason for going to the factory and opening the magnificently furnished private office which his wife had fitted up in honor of his retirement and her triumph. It was the end of the business year in the realm of crackers, and, according to his orders, a trial balance of his affairs was presented to him.

He had inspected such a balance just a year before, a balance which showed him to be worth a trifle over twelve millions. It had not roused him even to an extra drink at the club, which he reached at two o'clock, according to the daily routine in which ran his life.

Why should the effect of a fourteen-million balance have been so different? What was there in the figures that made him dance about and make faces at himself? It is a problem for a psychologist. We can only add what the Honorable Patrick said to himself that eventful morning.

"You're a rich man, Patrick," he began, when the mysterious effect of the figures permeated him. "You are a very rich man, and you're getting richer all the time. Last year it was twelve millions; this year fourteen. And what fun are you getting out of it?"

"You are rich enough to have anything you want. You can go in for horses or fast yachts or air-ships. You can even take a flyer in public libraries. You can—why, Patrick O'Connor, you can live your own life, any old life you wish! You can have your own way!"

All this he said to himself as he stamped up and down over the thick carpet of his private office. His stock of similes was as limited as his ability to enjoy his means, but the ancient one of the worm that turned came to him, and brought him up short before the glass.

He knew what he wanted to do. Never had there been any doubt in his mind what his own way was. He wanted to run his factory, to make crackers, billions of them; to sell them in a market which he forced to expand and grow. He wanted to get back into the harness, to quit loafing and end this eternal climbing after social position.

He had pressed the half-dozen buttons on his desk, and was waiting.

No one answered. Why should any one answer? The bells from the private office had not rung in five years. What could the "boss" want with the janitor, an office-boy, a stenographer? The wires were probably crossed; that accounted for their ringing this morning.

Then the bells rang again, short, sharp, impatient rings. The janitor knew that no crossing of wires would give such signals. The office-boy decided to see who was "kiddin'" him

from "de main guy's hold-out." The head stenographer told off one of her assistants to answer "that miserable bell." Even Thornton Wells, son-in-law, manager of the works, the honorable Patrick's successor, came to see what possessed "the old man."

The janitor was first to arrive, and nearly fell dead at his orders.

"You see that lookin'-glass?" growled O'Connor, gruffly, pointing out the handsome mirror to which he had lately addressed himself. "You pack that out of here!"

"Where will I take it?" asked the man.

"Take it anywhere. I don't care a rap what you do with it. Get it out of my sight. The idea of a lookin'-glass in a work-shop!"

To the office-boy: "Fill these ink-wells, and bring a bunch of pencils, sharpened."

"Where's your note-book?" he demanded of the pretty stenographer.

"Did you want to dictate a letter?" she gasped, in surprise.

"What did you suppose I rang for? I want two of you women, and bring your type-writers in. I like to hear the noise; makes me think there's something doing."

Thornton Wells, to put it mildly, was amazed at this sudden eruption of activity. Had the old man suddenly gone off his head? Had he better telephone for Mrs. O'Connor, or for his doctor?

"Beginning to-morrow, Thornton, you'll take charge of raw materials. I'm going to get back into harness and run things in here."

There was a firmness about the millionaire's tone which Thornton did not fancy. It did not invite opposition, but he ventured to protest mildly.

"Are we not running things to suit you? The factory was never in better shape, never made more money. What's the matter?"

"Nothing at all, Thornton," said O'Connor, in a somewhat gentler tone. "I'm satisfied. You've managed a lot better than I ever believed you could."

But I want to go to work. I'm tired loafing."

"But, father——"

"Now, don't begin 'fathering' me," interrupted the older man, sharply. "Here at the works we'll cut that out. You take charge of raw materials in the morning. Send Bowers to me when you relieve him."

Thornton, more amazed than ever, bowed and started out. This was a case for his wife to handle. She could wind the old man around her finger any day.

"Salary will be the same," O'Connor called after him. "I'm not trying to shorten you up."

Then he pulled off his coat, and settled down to work in earnest. He had the order clerk in with his books. "We can double this business," was his comment. He talked to three or four persons over the telephone in jerky sentences that were all business. He rattled off a dozen letters to one stenographer, and called for another one, that the first might begin transcribing at once.

He enjoyed every minute of it. It was glorious, this having something to do again. His blood tingled and jumped in his veins. His cigars—he lighted a fresh one with the last glow of the one which was smoked out—his cigars tasted better. Already, he was beginning to feel an appetite for luncheon which a dozen tonics and changes of scene had not been able to supply.

He sent for the foreman of the bakery department, a gray-haired veteran who had grown ancient with the works. The old fellow was overjoyed at O'Connor's return to business, and ventured to say so.

"What brands are we turning out now, Harker?" the owner asked.

"Well, there's the Snap-Snap, an' the Eat-Easy, an' the Cantdowith-outer, an' the Zip-Zip, an'——"

"You're forgetting the O'Connor part of it, aren't you?"

"We don't use your name any more, Mr. O'Connor," the workman explained. "We got orders to drop it

out just after you went to Europe that first time."

"Drop it out, eh? What for?"

"Well, they says as how your wife didn't like to see the family name tied to a cracker," he answered, simply. "She objected to the 'Irish Incomparables,' too, and we dropped that."

"So my wife didn't like the family name tied to a cracker?" he mused, and, turning quickly to the baker, he demanded: "Yet they were about the best crackers that ever came from an oven, weren't they?"

"None better was ever baked than the O'Connor brands," he answered, loyally, "if I do say it myself, who shouldn't."

"We'll put the name back, Harker," he said, determinedly. "We'll put it back and keep it back." He thought for a moment. "How does 'O'Connor's Dublin Dips' strike you? It'll be something new to advertise. I'll bring you the recipe to-morrow."

The old baker went out, smiling down into his collar. "The old man's come to his senses again," he said, slapping his flour-stained knees, "an' now we'll make *crackers*."

"O'Connor's Dublin Dips." The millionaire repeated it to himself several times, and each time his expression was more pleased. "I'll brand New York with that from the Battery to the end of the Bronx. Belinda"—for such was his wife's name—"Belinda will spin around on her ear, and they may put me out of the club, but those crackers will be the tastiest things that ever came over."

"Why shouldn't I get some fame out of it? A man writes a book and he gets his name under the title just as big as the printer will let him. A man builds a mighty bridge, and everybody knows he built it. If one hits on a new engine, an air-ship, a system of wireless telegraphy, a new disease or a cure for an old one, he gives it his name. That's fame. I'm good at nothing but crackers, and, Belinda or no Belinda, posterity is going to know it. I'm going to have my bundle of fame, if I have to pay for it at regular

advertising rates. I'm going to raise a dust, if it's only cracker dust."

He got the lithographer by telephone, and demanded poster designs for four-eight-and sixteen-sheet "paper." "Have an Irish maid smiling down from the corner of it," he advised, "and make the O'Connor large. You can't get the letters too high."

He chuckled with glee as he planned a surprise for his wife. It involved purchasing an entire page of a certain journal of fashion, which regularly chronicled the comings and goings of the set in which his wife and daughters moved. This page should cry out the many merits of the new cracker, "O'Connor's Dublin Dips."

"That will pay 'em up for draggin' me to Europe the first time!" he exclaimed, joyously.

He secured other publicity for the new cracker that afternoon, not less than half a page in every newspaper that ran a society column. "The half-page in *The Star* squares us for four Winters at Palm Beach," he figured. "That half-page in *The Crescent* may remind them that they've kited me from pillar to post for four Summer seasons. One half-page in *The Cross* is a receipt for two hundred nights at the grand opera, when I might have been snoozing at home with me pipe." The Irish would crop out now and then, and always when he thought of his pipe.

And so it went, through the entire list of dailies. They had danced, his wife and daughters, and now they must pay the piper in cracker publicity.

He was driven home that afternoon in his faultlessly appointed automobile, a contented, self-satisfied, happy man. He felt ten years younger and almost like shouting as the driver turned in from Riverside Drive, and left him at the entrance of his marble palace.

He rang for a servant to ask about his wife.

"Mrs. Addison Stewart's reception, this afternoon, sir," explained the under-butler who was on duty.

He went to his rooms and found Alphonse laying out his evening clothes. Alphonse was a particularly bitter pill. He had been swallowed under protest in the general weakness that had marked his behavior in the five long years of subjection.

The French valet certainly did not enter into the new scheme of life which had begun so auspiciously. O'Connor did not even bother to ask what affair he was expected to attend that evening.

"Alphonse," he said, "I'm not going to need you any longer. My boy up at Yale needs one of you. Go to him, if you like."

And he handed the astonished man a card on which he had scribbled:

DEAR JOHN:

A valet for you. I've gone back to work, and will dress myself in the future.

FATHER.

He found his way presently to the loft above the great ball-room, in which were stored the few relics of the past which he had been able to keep. He was looking for an old, sadly worn suit of frieze which had covered him in his first stormy days in America, days when he had sold Bibles and prayer-books from a push-cart.

He came across it finally in the bottom of an old trunk, and rejoiced. He lived over the struggle days which brought him the stake to start a bakery. He fought the fight over again which made the bakery expand into a modest cracker factory, and the factory into the producer of millions which he now owned.

Finally, he climbed into the old suit. He had grown somewhat stouter, and it was an extremely tight fit, but he put up with the inconvenience.

Then he remembered that dinner would be along in an hour or so. Long since he had given up trying to get his favorite dishes into the menu. But that was before he had gone back to work.

"What are you going to have for dinner to-night?" he demanded of the huge English butler, the tyrant of the establishment.

"Madame ordered dinner before she went out, sir."

"Well, what did she order?"

The butler brought him the menu, carefully written out in the angular hand of fashion which Belinda had acquired with difficulty.

"Bah! It's French from beginning to end. Send up the cook!"

Amazed at the summons, but hardly daring to disobey, monsieur of the white cap came above stairs.

"We are going to have a civilized dinner to-night," began O'Connor, briskly. "Chop out all these *à la* mixtures and give us a potato soup, a big, fat beefsteak, some corned beef and cabbage, and a pie. Understand?"

But the Frenchman did not understand, as he spoke no English. O'Connor knew no French, and the butler was too surprised to interpret.

"Tell him to take a vacation," said O'Connor, finally, in despair; "and send Mary to me."

Mary was a relic of less prosperous days, when one servant was all they could afford. She was one of the reminders his wife would have put out of sight, had he not insisted on retaining her.

"Do you suppose, Mary," he said, with a twinkle in his steel-gray eyes, "that you could manage to cook a good, old-fashioned dinner to-night?—the kind we used to have when we lived in a flat; plenty of potatoes——"

"And corned beef," interrupted Mary, her old face lighting up.

"And don't forget the cabbage and beefsteak."

Mary departed at once to try her hand at the dinner, and O'Connor sat down to await the final storm of his little insurrection, the completion of his triumph over the domination of his fashion-mad "women folks."

Not for a moment did he doubt the issue. He had found himself, caught his stride, and all the wives and daughters in Christendom could not have made him lose a step. He looked forward to the coming of his "women folks" with a keen relish, and

he could not understand why he had submitted so meekly in the past. He was not sorry, though. If he had not submitted he would never have known the joy of this day of rebellion.

He heard the swish of their skirts in the hall as they came in from the reception at six o'clock. But the supreme moment was not yet. They rushed off to their rooms and their maids, to be done over for the evening party that was to come. He puffed at his pipe contentedly. He could afford to wait.

A Normandy chime in the hall was striking eight when his wife entered the library. She was a stunning matron, and Worth had outdone himself on her gown. A queen might have envied her diamonds, and even more her stately carriage.

She did not see him when she first came into the room, but, when she did, and observed that he had not dressed for dinner, she pounced upon him.

"Well, of all the slovenly, lazy, good-for-nothing, disgusting men, Patrick O'Connor, you are positively the worst," she cried. "Eight o'clock, and not dressed yet! What has got into you?"

Patrick chuckled. What had got into him, indeed? He didn't know and he didn't care, so long as it remained with him.

"I'm not going to dress," he growled, without removing the pipe from his mouth.

"Not going to dress? The idea! You know this is the night of the cotillion for the Russian duke. Do you think you can go in that outlandish garb?"

"Not going to no cotillion," he growled again.

She was beginning to be angry with him. The tapping of her foot against the fender showed it, and the fire that had made him tremble so many times was in her eye.

"Now, you get up from that couch, and let Alphonse rush you into your evening clothes," she commanded.

"Alphonse is gone!" he said, chuckling.

"Alphonse gone?" she cried.

"Sent him up to Yale. John may find use for him, but the old man's going to dress himself after this."

"What do you mean by sending him away without consulting me?" she demanded, not yet realizing that the downtrodden one whom she had long ruled so easily had risen and was in a state of most active insurrection. "How will you ever dress for the dance?"

He got up then, and faced her, his short, stout legs spread apart, his chubby hands deep in the pockets of his coat, an attitude she particularly despised.

"Belinda," he began, in sharp tones, hard as steel, in a voice she did not know, and at which she wondered. "Belinda, it's all up. Your jig is danced. The deal is closed. From this time on I'm running things."

His daughter, the beautiful Laura, entered the room and started at the significance of their attitudes, but O'Connor did not even pause.

"I've been a worm, and I've done lots of fool things because you drove me to them, but I've turned. Understand? Turned!"

"Has the man gone mad, mother?" demanded Laura, the haughty. "Look at his clothes!"

"That's quite enough from you, young woman," he snapped, his jaws closing on the words like a steel trap. "Another disrespectful word and you go to bed without your supper."

She did not understand, and could not explain this dreadful change in parental attitude. For the moment, she was quite subdued.

"Yes," continued the tyrant, who had found himself, "I'm going to run things here and at the factory. Took charge to-day. Put Thornton at raw materials, and planned a lot of new business."

"But the cotillion, Patrick," his wife protested, shrilly. "I'm on the receiving line, and Laura is to dance with the duke. You've simply got to go."

"Got to go, is it? Got to? Got to?

Belinda, don't you ever say 'got to' to me again. I'll give out all the got-to orders, and here's the first one: You have got to stay home from the cotillion and amuse me!"

Laura forgot her pose as the cold and haughty one, and began to cry like any flesh-and-blood girl of nineteen deprived suddenly of the finest dance of the year, to say nothing of a most marriageable aristocrat.

"Stop it!" commanded the tyrant. "Your sister and Thornton can take you to the cotillion. Tell them your ma was sick."

The matron winced at the homely word, but in her heart there was a slight glow, for it reminded her of the love days, the bitter-sweet struggle days of push-cart and bakery, when the love of the fat, puffy Patrick was above everything else, and she had no ambition but to make him happy.

The conversation at dinner was decidedly limited—one question from the matron and a most respectful answer from the butler. The question came with the soup, a thick, potato soup, Irish to the last drop, old Mary's pride.

"But I ordered consommé, Haverstraw!" she protested. "How comes this awful mixture?"

"The master reordered the dinner, madame," answered the butler.

That was all there was to it, except that O'Connor had three helpings of soup and Laura left the table when the corned beef and cabbage were served. It was entirely too gross for her finishing-school taste.

"You'll find me in the library, Belinda, when you've removed yourself from that creation and got into something comfortable," he said, as they finished the silent meal. His voice was soft now, and full of hints of good humor, but there was something in his eye which told her it would be useless to protest further.

There was one world left for him to conquer on this day of days, one will yet to be broken, and he looked forward to it with positive joy. He did not have to wait long, for Ethel, the

eldest daughter, was wild with indignation and anger at the transference of her husband to a subordinate place in the works. She had long been a particular thorn in O'Connor's side. She excelled them all in planning social tortures for him, and in preventing his escape. Her ambitions had started it all, and without her iron hand the mother would never have succeeded in subjugating him. She was to be broken that evening as on a wheel.

In full regalia and paint of social war, she swooped down on him before his cigar was half finished. The first five minutes were entirely her own. She filled them with a shocking tirade, full of fierce invective, and ended with a threat of a commission to inquire into his sanity, with a prearranged verdict of confinement in a private asylum for life.

"You wouldn't send your poor old father to the mad-house? You wouldn't do that, would you, Ethel?" he begged, with well-feigned fear, at which he chuckled inwardly.

"That is just what we will do!" she cried. "We'll send you to the mad-house to-morrow, if you don't give Thornton the factory and quit trying to run things here at home."

He played with her a little longer, but she would admit of no alternative. It was the mad-house or submission. When he tired of the game, of the exhibition of her scorn; when he had proved her utter lack of filial love or respect, he turned tyrant again.

Calling a servant, he commanded that his wife and daughter and Ethel's husband be summoned immediately. While waiting, he seized a poker and held it in the coals of the fireplace. It was red hot when his wife, who was the last to come, appeared.

The four against whom he had taken his stand were on one side of the fireplace. In the hard-wood floor he seared a line with the red-hot poker. Then, with great dignity, he took his station with the line between him and his family.

"Makes an ugly scar, doesn't it,

that line?" he began. "It stands for the division in this family, which is an ugly thing in itself. It is going to be wiped out, or the family is. Now it is for you to decide which it will be.

"The crossing of that line means something to each of you. For you, Belinda, it means that you love your husband and that you are going to do your duty as a wife first, and get into the Carstens' set afterward. For you, Laura, it means the obedience which you owe your father as long as you are under my roof. Ethel's crossing stands for a cessation of interference in my immediate affairs, and Thornton's, that he is delighted with the chance to rustle with raw materials at twenty-five thousand dollars a year."

He took out his watch. "You have five minutes in which to decide. All who have not crossed in that time will leave this house, never to return."

It was Ethel who attempted to marshal the opposition. She rushed over to her mother, and began to plead with her.

"Stand against him, mother dear! Don't cross his horrid old line. It's plain that he is crazy. We must send for the doctors, and have him locked up. He can't turn you out, if you will just be firm. Talk to him as you used to do. Bring him to his senses."

"It would be no use, my dear child," the mother said, slowly. "You don't know him as I do. When he takes a stand like this, it is no use fighting against him."

"But if he is crazy, mother, and the doctors will say he is, you can shut him up and divorce—"

The mother sprang to her feet. "Ethel, don't speak of such a thing! He is not crazy; he's just his old self. And divorce—why, why, I love him! I do love him, as I did the night he carried me out of the Hibernian ball, and off to the parish house and the priest, whether I would or no. Patrick!" she cried; "dear old Pat!" And she was across the line and into his arms.

"I was just a-bluffing," he con-

fessed, when the three rebellious ones had followed her; for they had followed slowly, a little sheepishly. "Want to go to that cotillion, Belinda?" he asked.

"I'd rather stay here with you," she said, running her fingers through

his grizzled hair for the first time in years.

"And I'd rather you would," he chuckled. "We'll figure out a recipe for 'Dublin Dips,' the cracker that is to make all New York smack its lips. You children get along to the party!"

A WOMAN'S CALCULATION

"WHAT! you're not going to smoke another cigar this evening, Henry?" said Mrs. Glibb to her husband.

"Yes, I am."

"And how many will that make since morning?"

"Oh, six, or possibly eight."

"You average six a day, don't you?"

"Perhaps so."

"And they cost you ten cents each by the box?"

"They do."

"Well, now, let me see: we have been married sixteen years, and you have smoked all of that time. Six cigars a day at ten cents each, leaving out Sunday, amount to sixty cents a day—or four dollars and twenty cents a week—or two hundred and eighteen dollars and forty cents a year, for sixteen years, which amounts to three thousand, four hundred and ninety-four dollars and forty cents. And now, if you had put four dollars and twenty cents a week into the savings bank for sixteen years, the interest and compound interest added to the principal would have amounted to simply thousands and thousands of dollars, and we would have had a roof of our own over our heads, and I could have had my sealskin and my silks and velvets as well as other women whose husbands never touch tobacco in any shape or form, having too much regard for the welfare of their families to indulge in any such selfish pleasure. And I wouldn't have to sit and blush for shame, every time we have callers, because of the parlor carpet being so faded and threadbare, and every chair in need of being upholstered, and the curtains all patched and darned, and my best house-gown made out of an old silk that was my best dress for three years before I made a house-dress of it. And I could sport my diamond ring or two and my pearls, like other women. And, when I made formal calls I could hire a carriage, like Mrs. Dresser, whose husband does not smoke eight or nine nasty cigars a day, and I could have a silk-flounced underskirt, as my sister Fannie has; but I can't have it because my husband must smoke his ten or twelve cigars a day. Sister Fannie got herself an eighteen-dollar hat yesterday and a feather boa that cost twenty dollars, and a ten-dollar fan, and not one of them could she have had if her husband smoked fourteen or fifteen cigars a day for his own selfish pleasure, and— Oh, well, go to the club if you will! A man who smokes twenty cigars a day is apt to prefer the club to the peace and quiet of his own home. What trouble this miserable tobacco does bring into the world!"

J. L. HARBOUR.

SATURDAY'S CHILD

By Juliet Wilbor Tompkins

The child that is born on the Sabbath day
Is blithe and bonny and good and gay.
Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace;
Wednesday's child is merry and glad,
Thursday's child is sour and sad;
Friday's child is loving and giving,
And Saturday's child must work for a living.

AT the top of the trail they paused for a moment, and Judy's alert blue eyes passed from point to point of the familiar scene—the pale outlines of distant peaks, with a bloom as of grapes on their gaunt sides encircling the tumbling masses of nearer mountains, sharp and broken and unmarked by any sign of human life. Below were the pointed tips of redwoods, crowded thick in a winding cañon, and about them stretched brown slopes, crisped by drought, sending up aromatic odors of sage and everlasting under the brilliant California sun.

Meldrum, reining up his horse a pace or two behind, looked at Judy, at the childish line of her brown cheek and the determined chin, at the strong, boyish figure in shirt, knickerbockers and leggings, seated with a boy's ease on the clumsy Mexican saddle. Then he, too, lifted his eyes to the rolling world of naked mountains before them, piled in a chaotic lavishness that made the Creation seem very near and vivid. The land here had not passed beyond "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Meldrum pushed back his sombrero from his hot forehead.

"And yet you can leave this, Judy!" he said.

She smiled gravely. "Oh, I'll come back to it some day," she said, half in

apology. "You see, I have had this always, while the other—well, I must try it, you know. Everything I want now is—over there." And she nodded toward the east. Judy always knew the points of the compass.

Meldrum started his horse down the steep trail, leaving her to follow. She let her whip fall in friendly fashion on his broad shoulder.

"You know, Johnny, it's not pleasant, leaving you, and all that," she said, as awkwardly as a boy. "You have been such a good old playmate—I am going to miss you like everything. But I must try it."

"I wish you needn't!" he exclaimed. "Somehow, the idea of your going off alone with no weapon but a play in your pocket—you don't know how hard it has been not to go to your mother and tell her what I thought."

"I know you don't believe in the play," said Judy, soberly. "Perhaps you are right; perhaps it's no good at all. But I've got to find it out for myself." She straightened in the saddle and threw back her shoulders. "If that isn't good, I'll do another," she said. "I'm not afraid."

"You don't know enough to be—that's what's the matter with you," said Meldrum, irritably. Then he reined up abruptly and, swinging himself to the ground, stooped intently over some discovery in the soft dust of the trail. Instantly he was all woodsman, frowning, judicious, absorbed. Judy, leaning on her high pommel, might have been one of the boulders that jutted out of the harsh soil, for all the recognition he showed of her pres-

ence. She smiled to herself, remembering certain other girls who had tried to ride or walk with Meldrum, and had come back with hurt feelings. Judy, being frankly unsentimental, could forgive an impersonal attitude, and was rather more comfortable when treated as a comrade than when it was forced upon her that she was an attractive young woman. Once Meldrum, in an unwonted mood of gaiety, had begun a note to her with, "Dear old chap." No term from all the category of admiration could have pleased her so much. She waited now in companionable silence until he lifted his head and motioned to her to dismount; then she slipped down and stooped beside him, the bridle over one arm.

"What tracks are those—?" he began.

"Deer," said Judy, promptly.

"How many?"

She studied the marks closely before answering. Meldrum was severe on a mistake.

"Three," she finally decided.

He nodded approval.

"Probably a buck and two does," she added.

"Why?"

"Well, one makes a larger, deeper track and goes with a longer stride."

"Why not a doe with two fawns?"

Judy bent closer over the trail. "No; they are too big," she asserted.

Meldrum rose, dusting his knee with his sombrero. "Good girl," he commented. "You do me credit, Judy."

She smiled under the praise, and scrambled back into the saddle unaided. The trail wound sharply down now, and presently dived into another region, a green twilight of towering redwoods, still and odorous and faintly chilly, even at this hour. The church-like hush was broken only by the rush of a splendid little brook and the occasional call of a bird. Even the feet of the horses were noiseless on the soft ground, padded by centuries of droppings from the giants overhead. It was a place to stir the senses, to clear away all that crowds the surface of life, leaving only its few big meanings plain. What had appeared complex

became suddenly simple in this massive solitude. Love and work—what else was there, after all?

Meldrum drew a deep breath, and turned his face to Judy, his eyes quick with some new purpose. She rode with her hand on her hip, looking about with alert interest. A bluebird scolded at them and she laughed, calling back an insult in his own tones.

"Jolly in here, isn't it?" she said. "I am getting awfully hungry, myself. When shall we lunch?"

Meldrum did not answer—another little way of his that had enraged other girls. Judy waited philosophically till his attention should return to her, and presently began to whistle. In their rides he had taught her to notice the different bird notes, and out of them she had made an informal symphony, a score of varying calls woven together with the brief song of the meadowlark, and ending in a sweet, high, jubilant trill that was a Spring ecstasy. With the last note she rose in her stirrups and threw her arms out wide.

"Oh, I could burst with it all—the sense of what is coming, and what I can and will do!" she exclaimed. "I must have the power—what else could make me feel like this, all alive, and bloodthirsty to try?"

"Youth," said Meldrum.

"Youth!" she repeated, impatiently.

"Sometimes, Johnny, you make me very tired!"

"I know; I wish I didn't," he said, apologetically. "But so many people mix up hope and talent! They want to sing for their supper, and instead they have to split kindling for it. I don't want you—splitting kindling in New York."

Judy sighed. "You are so old and wise! Do be young with me just this one day. Let's believe everything we want to—and, oh, do let's eat!"

She slipped out of the saddle and threw herself face down for a drink from the brook. A moment later she scrambled up laughing, with wet cheeks, and searched her various pockets for a handkerchief. Meldrum drew

out his own and gravely dried her face. Then he bent down and kissed her.

She started back, looking more amazed than anything. Meldrum himself looked almost as surprised.

"Johnny," she said, after a pause, "that didn't happen."

"Yes, it did," he answered, doggedly.

"Then I shall have to go home." And she turned toward her horse.

A little smile came into Meldrum's eyes. "You said that we should be young and believe what we wanted," he suggested. "Can you stay if I apologize? I won't say I am sorry, but if begging your pardon—"

Judy dropped down on a log and began to laugh.

"I can't be haughty in these clothes!" she said, looking ruefully at her knickerbockers. "Never mind, we'll forget it. All the same, Johnny," growing serious again, "it wasn't square of you, and I don't like it."

"Forgive me, dear old chap!" And he held out his hand. There was still a lurking triumph in his eyes, but she decided to ignore it.

When they had lunched, Judy dropped back luxuriously on the cushioned earth with her arms under her head. Her eyes rested with friendly appreciation on Johnny's strong frame, big and yet graceful, his square-cut, serious features, the humanizing cleft in his chin that mitigated the line between his eyes. They were keen, observant eyes, capable of severity, but the deep kindness about his mouth betrayed him. One would know at a glance that Johnny loved animals and little children, and was slightly impatient of the average young woman. He was now clearing away the remains of their luncheon, scrupulously burying all signs of rubbish. He had always attended to every detail of their trips himself, without fuss or words. Judy had only to set out, care-free; there would be food when it was needed, she would find herself taken care of at every point. There was no gallantry in this—he would let her mount and dis-

mount unaided, and he scolded her roundly for any mismanagement of her horse; yet she found it wholly satisfying. Judy was not an average young woman.

"You are a good provider, Johnny," she said, when he had washed the telescope silver drinking-cup in the brook and folded it into its case.

"What good will that do you, off in New York?" he asked, throwing himself face down a few feet away. "Judy, I don't like to ask you questions, you're such a reserved little cuss"—they smiled at each other—"but, honestly, are you taking plenty of money?"

"Yes, plenty, truly; enough for several weeks there. Mother grew reckless when she realized that it was the last time."

He lifted his head quickly. "The last time?"

She nodded. A hard look had come into her eyes.

"If I don't succeed in this, I am going to earn my own living, teaching the kids in the valley school. They will give me a position."

"But, my dear girl, why? You surely haven't lost—"

"Oh, no! And I suppose my father meant the money for me as well as for my mother—what there is. But I can't stand it any longer." She sat up abruptly. "What's the use of pretending? You know how it is at home—a fight over every dollar that is spent. I can't put up with it any longer. Everything I have ever done or had in my life has been spoiled by a struggle first." She spoke rapidly, with the relief of letting it all out for the first time. "We have a beautiful old place, and plenty to eat, and my mother thinks it is foolish to want anything else that costs money. She never took me anywhere in her life. I have had to do it all alone, or stay here till I died. She didn't send me to school in San Francisco—I sent myself, and I had to fight for it. I have been all about the state by myself, and that is why I'm not afraid of going to New York alone. I have run myself since I was ten years

old. And it is all this that has made me reserved—a reserved little cuss," she broke off, with a smile. "There, I have given you the story of my life! Now let's forget about it. But I wanted you to understand that I just had to go. Wouldn't you try any experiment if the alternative was teaching the valley kids?"

"There is always another alternative." John spoke hesitatingly, his eyes on the ground between his elbows.

"If you were to marry——"

"Ugh!" she interrupted, briskly, "that would be worse yet. No marrying for me—I'd hate it. Oh, I want to be free," she spread her arms out wide; "I want to stretch my wings; I want to go head first into the world!"

John's forehead dropped down on his arm. "I suppose you've got to go," he said, presently. "One thing, Judy: if you ran short of money, you would let your mother know, wouldn't you? You would write——?"

"I'd starve first," was the curt answer.

"But, my dear girl! Pride is all very well——"

"I shall never ask my mother for money again as long as I live. And you wouldn't either, in my place."

"Then would you ask me?"

She laughed. "Perhaps! But I sha'n't need it. I tell you, I am going to make my fortune."

"Well, good luck, old chap!" He rolled on his side and held out his hand to her with a smile.

"You're a good sort, Johnny," she answered, with a sturdy brown hand in his.

Toward sunset they remounted and rode out of the odorless green twilight and up the wide slope of shining brown grass, the bare mountains about them showing gold and purple and blue-black in the changing light. At the top of the trail they paused to look back on the pointed tips of the redwoods in the cañon below. A meadowlark flung his sudden song up to them. Judy answered and broke into her own bird symphony, a fine, sweet little thread of melody, plaintive for all its joyous-

ness. Meldrum laid his hand on her horse's back.

"Judy," he said, "is there nothing that can keep you—nothing you hate to leave—nothing you want here?"

She looked gravely off to the east and shook her head.

"No; everything is—there."

II

THE rehearsal was going badly at the Columbian that morning. Miss Barron was "in a mood," and the manager had wisely turned his attention to drilling a band of supers at one side of the stage, leaving her to rehearse herself. His patient voice came to them at intervals: "For God's sake, boys, use your intelligence!"

Miss Barron's mood was not a temper—such a thing was unknown to her joyous philosophy; but she chose to see everything in a spirit of caricature that day, and the cast was helpless with laughter. Two young fellows just out of the dramatic school, acting very hard and oh, so seriously! looked on with amazed disapproval, and Eveleth finally dropped his eye-glass with a bored sigh.

"My dear Rose, I should like to go home some time to-day, you know," he said, his English inflections emphasized by disapproval.

"Why, certainly—now, if you like," said Rose, generously. "I don't really see what this play needs of a leading man, anyway."

"Ah, but the leading man has great need of this play," said Eveleth, imperturbably. "Now, will you go through this last scene properly, or will you not?"

"Oh, very well, then!" And for an hour or two real work was done, the manager returning to his post at the prompter's table as unobtrusively as possible, lest he should, in his own phrase, "set her off again." When she was at last released, she dropped down on a chair in the wings and Eveleth joined her with milk and sandwiches from the general supply. The

sight of him, long, lean, faded, immaculate, drinking out of a milk-bottle, always amused Rose.

"It ought to be absinthe; nothing else would suit your gently critical air," she said, biting into a sandwich with frank and joyous appetite.

"Indeed, I much prefer milk," he protested, indolently.

She drew an awestruck breath. "What a wicked life you must have led—to have come out at milk already!" she exclaimed.

He was looking at her abstractedly, at her splendid bigness, the vivid brown eyes, the beautiful, generous, careless mouth.

"Oh, I have not been especially wicked," he said, finally. "I have wanted to, of course, but all the vice I could find seemed to me—oh, rather nasty and messy, don't you know. If I could find a new kind, that was not banal or vulgar or a frightful bore, I should enjoy being a devil."

"You want a nice, refined vice, suited to artistic sensibilities," she suggested. "Now, I find the world full of fascinating temptations, myself."

"Indeed?" He drew his chair closer. "This begins to be interesting."

"It is—deeply. For instance, I should love to have five more sandwiches and another bottle of milk—oh, if I ever dared eat all I wanted! Why shouldn't I grow fat, if I choose! But they won't let me." She pushed the provisions away. "Take them out of my reach, Evvy."

When he came back she was reluctantly unfolding a type-written manuscript.

"Such a dear little girl brought me this play to read," she explained. "She wrote it herself in the wilds of California, and came here all alone to sell it, poor lamb!"

"Of course it is no good," Eveleth asserted.

"Of course—perfectly hopeless; but I had to look at it, she had such nice blue eyes. It was written especially for me—imagine!"

"Where did she ever see you?"

"In San Francisco, two years ago. She is coming here this afternoon for an answer, so I must wade through the rest of the thing. Oh, it is clever, in a way; she has ideas. With ten years' work and experience she might turn out something actable, though it isn't likely."

"Shall you tell her that?"

"Oh, Evvy! Break her heart? What do you take me for? She has the dearest little way about her—something gallant and boyish, and she looks straight at you, and she's scared perfectly stiff, but she'd die before she'd show it. I couldn't hurt her."

Eveleth looked faintly amused. "I suppose she thinks you are the most wonderful being on earth—a dazzling fairy princess, to be approached with trembling of the knees and stammering of the tongue," he commented.

"And so I am," said Rose. "Go away now, and let me finish this thing. Of course, she has seven-minute asides for every character, poor baby!"

Judy's name was brought in during a brief lull in the afternoon's work. Rose hospitably carried two chairs to a secluded corner and shook her head at Eveleth, who was leaning against the wall a few feet away.

"Go away, Evvy; you will embarrass her."

He screwed in his single eye-glass and folded his arms across his chest. "Oh, she won't mind anything as foolish as I—look," he said, lazily.

Judy came in bravely, very serious and businesslike, with only a red spot on either cheek to betray her. All her dreams for the past two years had centered about this moment—when she should be admitted to the star's presence to learn the fate of her play. In her dreams, the star had invariably accepted the play, with high praise; but the actual moment brought a depressing conviction that no ignorant girl from the West could possibly do work worthy of attention. The feeling had been coming all the week while she waited for the verdict, wandering about the streets and learning to find her way with the same sturdy

self-reliance that had guided her through the home woods. The overwhelming rush of the streets, the men who stared or even, once or twice, spoke, did not frighten her in the least; but when the stage door closed behind her and she waited in the narrow paved alley for her summons, her knees shook and her jaw trembled and her heart went in great, heavy thumps till she felt she must run away or scream in sheer terror. Then a boy came to guide her in, and she clutched her courage in both hands as she followed him up and down steps and past jagged canvases that stood for foliage, to the big, bare stage.

Rose met her with both hands outstretched, her brown eyes shining with the kindly gaiety that was so easy to them.

"So here is my friend from California—" she began.

Judy smiled brightly, but her tongue felt so thick she did not dare try to shape definite words.

"Sit down here and talk about your play," Rose went on. "It is very clever, you know—really remarkable for a first attempt. Of course, I am not going to take it—I should begin by abusing it instead of praising it, if I were. But I want you to tell me how you got the idea, and all about it."

The shock came so gently under the warm flattery of Rose's smiling eyes that Judy scarcely noticed it. She had come nerved for rejection, but, somehow, this scarcely felt like it. She was beguiled into an answering smile.

"Tell me where it is bad; I'd much rather talk about that," she said.

Rose turned over the manuscript and reflected judicially. "Well, then, here is the serious defect," she said. "You have written your play for a star, and yet you don't bring her on at all in the first act. Now, no right-minded star on full salary"—she smiled humorously—"is going to put up with that!"

The criticism was accepted so eagerly that Rose, out of her easy kindness, was moved to offer others, and Judy's fright vanished under the consciousness that her play was being taken

seriously. The stage-manager's voice finally broke in on them:

"Third act once more, if you please, Miss Barron."

Judy started up guiltily. "I ought not to have stayed so long—but you were so good!" she exclaimed. "Some day, if I should do this all over, will you look at it again?"

"Gladly," Rose promised. "Come and see me some Sunday afternoon—nice girl! I am always at home then." She pressed Judy's hands, and sent her away, smiling happily, with her rejected play clasped exultantly like a weapon; then she turned back to Eveleth.

"Isn't little California a duck?" she demanded.

"But you encouraged her shamelessly," he protested. "The poor girl will spend weeks doing that stuff all over again. Why didn't you send her back to her mother?"

"Oh, how could I?" she exclaimed, reproachfully. "You are such a cold-blooded brute! I had to make her happy. You don't think I was horrid, do you? Please, Evvy!" The brown eyes showed an intensity of pleading suggestive of tears; how far it was playing no man could tell.

Eveleth abandoned his point without a protest. "You are always a dear and a sweet," he said.

"Please, Miss Barron, that was your cue," said the stage-manager, wearily.

III

JUDY flew back to her boarding-house and fell upon her manuscript, eager to use her new knowledge; but, as she read, her enthusiasm faded, and a dissatisfied frown clouded her eyes. The play seemed to her, all at once, poor and weak, especially for such a creature as Rose Barron. Presently she pushed it from her and sat with her hands clasping her knee, staring into the growing dusk. An hour passed but she did not move. At the summons to dinner she went down mechanically, but was scarcely conscious she had

done so until she found herself mounting the stairs afterward. Lighting the gas, she found paper and pencil and began to make notes, scribbling eagerly, with long pauses between. It was twelve o'clock before she threw down the pad, with a little laugh and a stretch of weariness.

A new play had been blocked out, in all the fullness of its four acts, a drama of love and action beside which the first was as a kindergarten piece. To be sure, there were problems yet to be met—a crime to which a motive must be fitted, a splendid sacrifice that still lacked an object; but these were details that could be grappled with later. Now she had to face practical difficulties. The money for the trip had been given grudgingly, with many sighing prophecies; no more could be asked for, that was settled. Judy's mouth took on a set line at the idea, and her eyes hardened. She had enough for two weeks more in her comfortable boarding-house and her trip home. But plays were not written in two weeks. She faced it with a growing smile of daring and excitement.

"Oh, be a sport!" she exclaimed, suddenly, bringing her fist down hard on her knee.

Two days later Judy was established in a small back room, sunless and dingy, in a sunless and dingy block. Her formal meals she took at a neighboring dairy restaurant; the informal ones she carried up the three flights and ate at her work-table, holding a small kettle over the gas, when hot water was necessary, till her arm cracked with stiffness. She had never been so happy in her life.

"Living in New York is much cheaper than we thought," she wrote her mother. "I shall probably stay several weeks more. Miss Barron has encouraged me a good deal, but there is nothing definite yet. Give my love to Johnny, if you ever see him, and tell him I am too busy to write to him."

Two Sundays went by before Judy found courage to send her card up to Rose's apartment. Rose, who was making tea for half-a-dozen callers,

studied the name in puzzled hesitation.

"Now, who can that be?" she finally demanded of Eveleth.

"Why, wasn't that the one with the play, the—?"

"Oh, of course!" Rose exclaimed. "Show her up; she's a nice girl."

"Too bad to show up a nice girl," protested a young woman in a blue tulle hat, with an air of pensive reminiscence. There was more laughter than the remark seemed to warrant.

"Polly, you are the worst!" said Rose, drying her eyes. Then she opened the door to Judy and stretched out both hands. "Well, little California! I thought you had wholly forgotten me and were never coming. Mr. Eveleth has been here every Sunday, just in the hope of meeting you—here she is at last, Evvy. Polly, you ought to know Miss Kent, though I am not at all sure that she ought to know you!"

Nothing could have been more pink and round and guileless than the face under the blue tulle hat, lifted protestingly to Judy.

"Isn't she the jealous cat!" exclaimed the young woman. "You've heard of this professional jealousy, my dear—well, now you see it. It's my blue tulle hat. Rose doesn't mind my acting, but my hats get her crazy. She spent ten minutes trying to persuade me to 'take it off and be more comfortable'; but I was on. Now, would you take off a blue tulle hat, if you looked as sweet as this in it?"

"Never—I'd sleep in it!" said Judy, finding herself unexpectedly courageous. The ready laughter that followed set her pulses dancing.

"Going over to the enemy—I like that!" Rose complained. "Never you mind, little California; the next time you want a play read, you'll see!"

"Oh, does she write plays?" cried Polly, with pleasing excitement.

"Indeed she does, and very good ones," Rose asserted; then she laughed at Judy's blush, putting a white finger in the middle of it. "We mustn't embarrass her. Now, this is Mr. Simeon Knowles—no, the plump one with the

chocolate cake; that is Lord Merrington on the couch, and the lady in the corner with the Egyptian eyes and all the cushions is Mrs. Froley—she was Belle Maurice once, but she is only Mrs. Herbert Froley now."

"More fool she," sighed the lady referred to, who was curled among the cushions like a frivolous Cleopatra, her eyes clinging drowningly to the impassive British profile beside her.

"Now, Belle, you know you wouldn't come back if you could," Rose protested. "You have everything on earth that—"

"My dear, you never were married," broke in Mrs. Froley. Her voice had a plaintive note that might have been trying in one less exquisitely pretty. "Believe me, there is nothing in life so delightful as a lover—or so unpleasant as a husband. You think, when you marry, you are merely going to domesticate your sweetheart, but it is nothing of the kind—you exchange him for a totally different creature."

"They're mean things," put in Simeon Knowles, a plump, boyish-looking man, with eyes like expressive currants, who might have been twenty but was probably nearer forty. Mrs. Froley's voice rose a key with the acuteness of her grievance.

"Why, before I was married, if I so much as bruised my little finger, Herbert was in anguish; it was, 'My God, you might have been killed!' Now when I almost break my neck, he says, 'How exactly like you!' and goes on with his paper. Oh, you can laugh! But you are being petted every night of the season, Rose Barron, while I never get a hand for my performance."

"Perhaps you don't give a good show," suggested Polly. Something in her brisk voice made Judy suspect that there was not much love lost between these two.

"Well, I have done *The Wife* in every known phase," sighed Mrs. Froley. "I have been the happy little wife, and the mysterious, alluring wife, and the good-fellow wife, and the pathetic, patient wife, and the brilliant, cynical wife—but, believe me, all a man wants

of a wife is that she should let him alone. It's all a frightful sell. Give me the good old clapping public, every time."

"Sometimes they don't clap," said Polly. "I've seen nights when they wanted me to let 'em alone, I can tell you. And if they get tired of you, there's no alimony in it."

"She's a thrifty little soul," commented Rose. "They haven't an atom of sentiment, have they, Miss Kent? You and I know a great deal better."

Judy smiled. It all seemed very brilliant and worldly to her.

"I've got sentiment, stacks of it," protested Simeon Knowles. "And I dare say Merrington has, though he keeps on saying nothing."

"Ah, well, I never talk, you know," said Lord Merrington, seriously. "I leave that to you clever chaps."

"But what do you do, then?" asked Polly, lifting her pink face to him with a childish naiveté that made Mrs. Froley's Egyptian eyes narrow viciously. "One must do something at a party, mustn't one?"

"Do?" Lord Merrington looked puzzled. "Why, I fancy I just—come, you know."

"And what more could anyone ask?" murmured Mrs. Froley, letting a slender hand fall upcurled between them on the couch.

"You are very good, I'm sure," said the Englishman, placidly. Polly shot a swift glance at Simeon Knowles; it might almost have been called a wink. There was mischief in the air, but Rose interposed.

"Polly, come and make fresh tea," she said. "You do it so much better than I, and little California wants another cup. Evvy, take her over by that small table and make a good impression for the rest of us. Mr. Eveleth is our best foot, Miss Kent; we always put him forward."

Judy took the indicated seat, though she would have preferred to stay beside Rose. This man with the worn, colorless face and English inflections rather appalled her. His eyelids fell half across his expressionless, light-gray

eyes as though to hold them up were too much trouble, his thin hair, prematurely gray, had a conceited curl, his dress and manner seemed to her affected; he had not shaken her hand, but had held it lifelessly for a moment, then let it slide away, an unpardonable offense to Judy's sturdy spirit. She was on the verge of active dislike when she looked up and met his smile—a smile so full of humor and sweetness and kindly simplicity that she could have begged his pardon for her past stupidity in not recognizing him as delightful.

"How wonderful Miss Barron is," she said, a little breathlessly, fearing to be found out.

"We all are," he answered, gravely. "Even I—and especially you."

"I! Oh, no!" She smiled at him, brightly, in case he should be making fun of her. "I am only an ignorant country girl. I don't know anything—except California."

"But think of knowing California! We know only a few blocks of Broadway."

"But doesn't 'a few blocks of Broadway' cover about everything—everything really interesting?" she ventured.

He considered her for several moments before answering. "It does not; but what is the use of telling you so?" he said, finally. "No one in love ever listens."

Judy looked up, startled, a little indignant. "In love!" she repeated. He smiled at the vigor of her repudiation.

"With Broadway," he explained. "I know the symptoms—I had it once myself. Perhaps you are a little in love with Miss Barron as well," he added, amusedly, very much as he might have put out a long finger to poke a kitten. Judy resented the attitude; her direct blue eyes showed fight.

"So you know the symptoms there, too?" she said, coolly.

"Do I!" He glanced across the room where Rose was teaching Simeon Knowles to beg with a lump of sugar on his nose. "My dear young lady, I—do you mind if I smoke?—I know

them from a to z"; and he rolled a cigarette dexterously between thumb and middle finger. "Why not?" he added, as Judy kept an irritated silence.

"Oh, I told you I was ignorant of everything but California," she said, bluntly. "Out there we either feel things so much we can't talk about them, or else we don't feel them at all. I don't understand anything else."

He looked at her with impersonal kindness. "Don't try to," he said. "Believe me, you have far the best of it. That is why we like you so much," he added, with a sudden smile; "because you are far too good for us!"

"I don't understand that, either," said Judy; but she smiled back.

"Evvy, come and play," called Rose. "I'm going to sing."

He rose languidly. "My dear Rose! Bad news should be broken gently, not flung at one's head."

"Look out, or I'll play my own accompaniment."

"Now, heaven forbid!" He seated himself at the piano and began to play with unexpected ease and brilliance. "What is it you feel impelled to sing?" he asked, over his shoulder. "If it is 'Violets' or 'The Rosary,' I shall go home at once."

"Then it is," said Rose; and they smiled at each other in a way that made Judy realize that she was, after all, only an outsider. A dim jealousy startled her with its quick pang. "I am nothing to them. Why should I stay?" she thought, impatiently.

"Little California is going to sing, too," said Rose, laying a hand on her shoulder; and the depression vanished like a mist.

Her cheeks were throbbing with excitement when she climbed her dingy stairs, an hour later.

"They like me, and they want to know me!" was her wondering thought.

IV

JUDY threw down her pencil and faced the problem squarely. The money for two weeks had done the work

of five, but now, in spite of dairy dinners and ten-cent breakfasts, it was gone. The trip home, figured down to its lowest point, was all that remained. Undoubtedly, the only course was for her to start home in the morning—with nothing to show for her faith in herself, nothing to appease her mother's injured sense of money thrown away, nothing to look forward to but days of dull grind in the valley school.

A vision of big, splendid Rose, rehearsing in the empty theatre or recklessly expending vitality on all comers in her apartment, made the life at home seem inexpressibly bald and colorless. Then Eveleth's face rose before her, listless, witty, kindly, lined with all experience, yet sweetened by the youngness of his smile. To Judy, fresh from elemental surroundings, he stood for all the glamour of the complex city world. And she had charm for him—that was the marvelous part of it. Her honest blue eyes and blunt answers had kept him beside her many an hour during the past weeks, even while he lazily admitted his infatuation for Rose. Her pulses gave a throb of excitement.

"Oh, I can't go!" she exclaimed, under her breath.

Yet if she stayed? One act finished and one half-done of a romantic drama did not offer a very firm foundation for a livelihood. She had told Rose nothing about the new play, dreading lest she should become a bore, and there was no chance for a real hearing now, for this was the last week of rehearsal, and Rose was working day and night. On Monday they were to open out of town, and it would be three weeks before they returned for the New York opening. Of course, if Rose was not going to like the play, it would be sheer folly to wait. And yet to go now! With a puzzled sigh she went dejected through the October dusk to the theatre.

The door-keeper at the stage entrance nodded to her familiarly and she passed in unquestioned, with a thrill of elation that was severely hidden, even from herself. Judy did not

approve of being elated by worldly honors. Rose was rehearsing, going wearily through a love scene with her head on Eveleth's shoulder and a sandwich in her hand. She looked fagged and tired, but she smiled brightly at Judy as she rattled through a passionate appeal.

"I sob violently," she added, with a little wave of her sandwich, which she finished comfortably while Eveleth went through with his lines as punctiliously as though a first-night audience confronted them. When she was released she came and put her lips against Judy's cool cheek. Judy colored under the caress; Rose's easy kisses always filled her with wondering gratitude, though she could only ignore them with lowered eyes.

"You are such a refreshing young person," Rose said. "You always make me think of trout streams and west winds and clean, wholesome, outdoor things. I like to see you come into the theatre—it's a change of air."

"I'm afraid you won't see me much longer," said Judy, soberly. "I ought to be going home."

"Why, but you are our mascot!" Rose spoke with a wail of dismay. "You have to be here for the first night—you can't go back on us like that! Evvy, come and tell little California that she mustn't go home yet."

Eveleth strolled across to them. "If she goes, it will be over my dead body," he said, languidly. Then he smiled at her, persuasively. "You are not tired of us already?"

Tired of them! Judy's heart felt a sudden stab of pain. But her dumb shyness before sentiment kept her to a brief "No."

"And there is the coaching trip," Rose added. "We're going off for the day the Sunday after we get back, and you are to come."

"I have chosen to sit by you; you must come," Eveleth added, turning away.

Judy sighed desperately. "Oh, I can't go away!" she exclaimed. "I wonder—would you hate me—are you too tired to let me tell you about a new

play I'm trying—? Just to see if it is utterly worthless?"

"Of course! I'd love it. Come out here where we won't be interrupted." And Rose led the way into the great, dark auditorium, inhabited only by a sweeping-woman and a strolling cat, and uncovered a couple of seats for them as far from the stage as possible. "Don't mind if I close my eyes," she added. "They're tired."

So Judy breathlessly set forth her plot, with illuminating bits of dialogue and stage business. Rose seemed intensely interested; at least, she sat perfectly still, with closed eyes, and offered no interruptions.

"Is it any good at all? Would you go on with it?" Judy finished, striving to speak with dispassionate coolness.

Rose opened her eyes with a slight start. "Why, it's most interesting! I don't see how you ever worked it out all by yourself," she said. "You are the child wonder of the Pacific Coast!"

"And you think it's better than the other?"

"Why, yes—yes, I should say it was much better," Rose decided, after a guilty pause.

"I am sure it is, too. There's more action. And you will look at it when it is done?"

Rose glanced remorsefully at the flushed cheeks and unsuspecting eyes. "Indeed I will, dear child. Bring it to me whenever you like—after the first night here. You aren't really going to leave us, are you?"

"Of course not," said Judy.

It was after six when she left the theatre, and the cool dark was starred with lights, orange and violet. All about was the bewildering crash and roar of a cityful of people going home for the night. The cars jolted past with black, swarming masses of humanity spilling over the platforms. Judy eyed them with amusement as she turned down-town.

"How Johnny would hate them!" she thought.

"May I walk home with you?" Eveleth's voice startled her back from a sudden vision of a mountain

trail and a stalwart horseman in sombrero and leggings. She turned to him with a certain relief.

"But I am not going home," she said. "This is the hour when I get my dinner; it doesn't grow under the same roof with me."

"Neither does mine, and I shall have to take it all alone," he suggested, with a sidelong glance at her.

"Yes, I am afraid you will," she said, demurely.

"You wouldn't dine with me, just this once? I know a very good little place near here—quiet and all that. Would it bore you?"

She smiled. *Bore* her!

"It wouldn't do," she said, regretfully. "Don't you know it wouldn't, yourself?"

"Well, not with some fellows," he admitted. "But I should take good care of you, you know. And you haven't any people here to be shocked."

"That is just it; it puts the responsibility on me, don't you see? If they were here, to be shocked and amazed, why—"

"Why—?"

"Well, it would have been fun!" she admitted. "You understand, don't you?"

"I understand that you are a very nice girl," he answered, looking down at the sweet, honest mouth and firm chin and the childish line of her cheek. "But what if I were—quite by accident—to get my dinner where you get yours? Could anyone object to that?" The contrast of his elaborate, hypercivilized personality to the noisy, slap-dash dairy with its marble-topped tables and cups a half-inch thick, brought an irrepressible laugh.

"How you would loathe it!" she said. "Rice and milk, ten cents; chocolate eclair, five cents—that will be my dinner. The girl who throws it at me will punch fifteen cents on a ticket and pay no further attention to me. Sometimes I take black coffee, but not very often; for that is five cents more."

If Eveleth was dismayed, he did not

show it. "I adore rice and milk," he said, gravely, "and I'd run a mile for a chocolate eclair." And he kept on persistently, though she stopped several times and suggested good night.

At the door of the restaurant Judy looked up to see him weaken, but he followed her composedly to her table in a corner. The place was, after all, clean and bright and not crowded. She pointed out to him the many expensive things he could order, but he insisted on having just what she did. When a bowl of milk was planted in front of him and a tight mold of rice slung down at one side, he screwed in his eye-glass and studied them with an intensity of puzzled interest that made Judy shake with suppressed laughter.

"It is delightful—but what do you do with it?" he asked.

"You put the rice into the milk, and sugar the unsubmerged portions, like this," she explained, as gravely as she could. "Then you eat it with a spoon, like this!" There was a struggle of rebellious dimples behind the clumsy spoon, and an answering light sprang into Eveleth's eyes. They laughed together joyously, and an odd glamour spread over the bald room as they ate their rice and milk. Their fellow-diners, dull, shabby, each eating stolidly alone with bent head and a general air of attending to an uninteresting duty, seemed miles remote from them, separated by some impalpable veil from their gay corner.

"Think of finding Arcady in the centre of town!" Eveleth finally exclaimed. "Baked apples—oh, we must have those! Eclairs are too mundane. And think of finding you—anywhere!" he added.

"We shall have to make it a coffee night," decided Judy. "Can you afford it?"

He felt anxiously in his pocket, then smiled relief. "Yes. Can you?"

"Just—if I walk all the way home."

"Is it very far?"

"Fully a block." That seemed pleasantly humorous to their mood.

"Are you going to ask me to call?"

"No."

"Oh! Well, to change the subject—but why not?"

"Because my apartment, though large and luxurious, is not adapted to callers."

"I see. Well, what shall we do, then?"

"I am going home to write letters; and you are going to your club for a good square meal, aren't you?"

"After all this! It would be a desecration to eat again to-night. Now for the coffee. How do you summon that proud young woman?"

"You say 'Hi!'"

"Hi!" repeated Eveleth, obediently.

"Two black coffees, please. Wouldn't 'I say!' have done as well?" he added.

"No; she comes Hi," said Judy, and kept a demure face under his reproachful stare.

"Little California, I didn't think that of you," he said, sadly.

"Then what did you think of me?" asked Judy, naively. A new wine seemed to be pouring through her veins. She could say things, look things, that she had never dreamed of before. A side of life that she had always shrugged away from, impatient or contemptuous, was suddenly revealed to her in a new light; she seemed to be looking into an enchanted country. Go back to California now! She laughed at the idea.

V

THE play did not progress very fast in the three weeks of Rose's absence, though Judy faithfully sat down to it every morning. A strange, rosy cloud seemed to have settled about her, wherein she reposed in contented blankness with absent eyes and smiling lips. She ate and slept very little and she scarcely thought at all. When she emerged she went out and stared at the shop windows or made frivolous purchases. The sunlight seemed spun sweetness, the chattering of the city sparrows was ecstatic melody. For the first time Judy felt a vague charm

in skirts and gloves and veils and all the feminine trappings that she had hitherto resented so hotly.

The fact that her money was going seldom troubled her. On the opening night she sent Rose a lavish box of flowers, and went in a shiver of excitement to the front-row seat that had been saved for her. Not knowing the ways of first-night houses, the play seemed to her an overwhelming triumph. Rose and Eveleth, called before the curtain, had smiling glances for her; then her big, beautiful Rose had to come out alone and laugh her thanks and gather up her flowers and even make a very small speech before they would let her go. And Judy's heart swelled with triumph till there were tears in her eyes; for she was in love with it all.

When the curtain fell on the final tableau, she edged her way through the departing crowd to a door back of the boxes that let her into her enchanted world. She had not seen Eveleth to speak to since that wonderful dairy dinner, over three weeks before, and something under her white blouse—a new white blouse of embroidered crêpe—pulsed and shivered and sang as she made her way sedately toward Rose's dressing-room.

Rose stood in the doorway with an excited group shaking her hands and patting her shoulders, all talking in shouts. A sudden shyness made Judy pause before they saw her, dismayed at her own unworthiness of the brilliant world that had opened to admit her. Then her pulses gave a start as she caught sight of Eveleth. He was leaning against a wall, apparently listening to a voluble little man who had button-holed him, though his eyes seemed to be more on Rose than on the speaker. His face, under the flaring gas, was hot and painted and tired. His listless voice, when he spoke, sounded thin and artificial. "That?" was Judy's startled thought. Was it for such a man as that that she had wandered into a fog of dreams? The rose cloud of the past weeks parted and rolled away, and her feet came smartly down

to earth. There was no pain in the shock—only amazement and a certain relief. She came briskly forward.

"Well, Rose of the World," she said, stretching out her hand over Mrs. Froley's spangled and jeweled shoulder.

Rose beamed welcome and drew her into the group. "Little California, I am glad to see you again!" she exclaimed. "So you liked us, did you? Come in while I get dressed. Belle, you may come, too, but the rest must run away." It was ten minutes before she succeeded in shutting the door on them. Then she turned to the grim, lanky colored woman who was waiting to dress her, putting her arms about the bony neck and burying her face.

"Now, Nance, do your worst; I can bear it," she said.

Nance accepted the caress stoically. "You done pretty good, Miss Rose; but you was better in New Haven," she said, firmly. "What you want to go skippin' through that love scene so fast for?"

Rose rocked gently back and forth, her face still hidden in the rigid shoulder. "You're right, Nance, you're always right," she lamented: "Go on—get it all out."

"Well, then, Miss Rose, you didn't listen good while that old gardener was tellin' you his troubles. Your eyes was sneakin' off to the boxes, and you was thinkin' how cute you looked in that white suit. Now, you know better'n that, honey!" Her voice softened a little. "Don't you, now? Wouldn't you have listened with all your heart and soul to anyone in such pow'ful trouble—specially when the story was goin' to mix up your lover presently?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" sighed Rose. Then she lifted her head with a laugh and a tightening of her arms. "You are so good for me, Nance! It's a wonder I don't hate you for it. But that is enough for to-night. You have got the praise all off me before it had time to soak in. Now, dress me quick, because we are all going to supper."

"You'd much better go to bed," was the severe answer.

"Don't bully me before Miss Kent; she isn't used to your harsh ways."

It amounted to an introduction, and Judy smiled with sudden liking at the severe, light-brown face, its features more like those of an Indian than a negro. Nance's return nod expressed a qualified approval.

"Nance has dressed me ever since I went on the stage—at the ripe age of seven," Rose added, "and she dressed my mother before me; and what she doesn't know about the profession isn't worth knowing!"

"But she never told on us," put in Mrs. Frole, listlessly; her voice was apt to be listless when there were no men present.

"No, I ain't never told," agreed Nance; "but it would have been mighty serious once or twice, if I'd gone delirious!" She was deftly putting Rose into her street dress, but she shot an occasional keen glance at Judy, who was looking on in amused silence as they talked. When they left the dressing-room she called Rose back on some pretext, and through the thin door Judy heard her ask:

"What's that li'l' girl doin' here, Miss Rose?"

"Why, that's a duck of a girl from California," Rose explained. "You'll love her, Nance."

"H'm! She ought to be home with her mama," was the brief answer.

"That's the kind that gets hurt, honey; look out for her."

"Oh, she is all right," laughed Rose, and swept them out to her cab. There was a group on the sidewalk waiting to see Rose pass, and the murmured "There she is!" made Judy thrill with reflected glory. A shabby youth sprang to shut the cab door, flushing at Rose's smile of thanks, and they whirled gloriously away; but Judy's thoughts kept going back to Nance's words.

"Am I the kind that gets hurt? And why? How?" she wondered.

The supper was given by a stout young man whose smooth, pale face seemed to be half chin. "Prosperous broker" was written on every curve

of his suave personality. Judy felt a flash of resentment at his easy friendliness, suspecting that he had not troubled to catch her name, that they were all asked merely to humor Rose. "If he went to a supper in what he considers his own circle, he would be different—less friendly, but more interested," she decided, and felt a childish desire to tell this complacent Mr. Kellogg that they were all quite as good as he.

Neither she nor Eveleth took much part in the gaiety of the supper. He seemed abstracted, and there was something gone from what Rose called his "gently critical air." Judy wondered about him quite dispassionately, putting away the past three weeks as she might have closed the cover on a story. But under all her thoughts ran the uneasy question:

"What does it mean—the kind that gets hurt?"

VI

WITH her emancipation from dreams came a bad hour of financial reckoning for Judy. It left her frightened and depressed, bitterly conscious of having been a little fool. As a result, she fell furiously to work, and all that week, night as well as day, she wrestled with her play, the old enthusiasm springing up within her higher than ever. Surely it must mean talent, this glow of creation, this willingness to endure any hardship for the chance to achieve. The play must be good, when it lived so vividly before her eyes. And, oh, the joy of showing Johnny that it was not merely youth that fired her; that she was of the glorious company that sing for their supper, whose work was not labor! "Save in his own country and among his own people," she murmured over her growing manuscript.

It was a strenuous week for the company, as well; for the critics, while praising the acting, were hard on the play, and various changes had to be worked out and rehearsed. Judy heard nothing from Rose or Eveleth, except for a brief note about the coaching party.

Then came an Indian Summer day of soft haze and delicate warmth, a clatter of neat hoofs and the gay call of the horn, laughter and the smell of dead leaves, and Judy found herself floating through a russet-and-gold country, with Eveleth beside her and Rose in reckless spirits on the box, while Polly's round, rosy face smiled out on every one from an unnecessary amount of white chiffon veiling, and Mrs. Frole, more plaintive and more exquisite than ever, made the most of her Egyptian eyes for the impassive profile of Lord Merrington. Simeon Knowles was beside Polly, and the suave and prosperous Mr. Kellogg had the reins. Eveleth was peacefully silent, so Judy breathed in the Autumn beauty and listened to the others with amused eyes. There was mischief brewing behind Polly's white veil, and Simeon was evidently a party to it. Judy saw the whispered conference that preceded a realistic burst of indignation from Polly.

"Why, Simmy Knowles!" she exclaimed, to all appearances outraged beyond endurance. "That's the meanest thing I ever heard in my life! I never did anything of the sort!"

Simmy was equally indignant. "Oh, very well, if you say so. But I was there, and I am in the habit of believing my own eyes."

"Then I advise you to give up the habit," snapped Polly, drawing as far away from him as the seat permitted. Every one was interested by this time.

"Why, little children!" exclaimed Rose, from the box.

"Well, I don't care!" Polly's blue eyes were as round as buttons in her pink face. "I won't have such things said to me. If Simmy isn't gentleman enough—"

Mrs. Frole interposed, "Bit," as Judy quickly understood.

"Poor Simmy! I am sure he doesn't deserve all this," she said, softly. He turned to her eagerly. "I knew you'd stand by me, Mrs. Frole!" Her heavy eyes caressed him, and there was a glint of satisfaction in their depths, as of one who filches some-

thing, however unimportant, from the enemy.

"Always, dear Simmy," she murmured.

"You're always good to me." And Simmy deftly swung himself over in front of her. "Merrington, change places with me, will you, like a good fellow? I'm not wanted over there."

Lord Merrington, cheerful and impassive, rose at once. "Certainly, old chap," he agreed; and Simmy was in his place before Mrs. Frole could get her breath.

Rose turned hastily back to the horses. An angry gleam of comprehension smoldered in the Egyptian eyes.

"Will she get him back?" murmured Judy, who felt as if she had a front seat at a comedy.

"Trust Belle!" answered Eveleth.

"You see, she really cares."

"For—for him?" Judy's freeborn Western lips found difficulty with the title.

"Oh, dear, no! but for his scalp. He is her pet conquest, just at present. She won't give him up lightly."

"And yet he hasn't seemed so very—conquered," Judy ventured.

"Oh, if you can keep one beside you with a grappling-iron, it counts as a conquest—here," said Eveleth. "I suppose, in California, men ford rivers and cross mountains for a smile from you, and you think nothing of it."

A sudden vision of a stalwart mountaineer who had ridden down twenty miles from a lumber camp to spend an hour with her, going back the same night when the moon rose, brought a shadow across Judy's eyes. She certainly had not thought of it then as a conquest; it was only good old Johnny. They had talked of fishing and hunting, he had played with her dog and she had petted his horse; then his hearty hand-shake, and he had ridden off down the moonlit road—not exciting, perhaps, but very much a man. The memory went through her like a keen pain, but she shrugged it away.

"I don't know anything about it," she said. "Conquests have never been much in my line."

He smiled at her, lazily. "Am I the first, then?" His tone awakened that little new devil within, with whom she had as yet barely become acquainted.

"How can I tell?" she said, demurely. "I don't know a conquest when I see it."

"Do you know it when you hear it?" Eveleth asked. "You have a quality, little California! You are as true as a fine boy, and as plucky, and yet—I am glad you're a girl, you know!"

"Sometimes I am glad of it, too," said Judy. The wine was beginning to steal through her veins again and the week of disillusion to seem unreal. He was only amusing himself, of course; but she could amuse herself, too.

He smiled at her with indulgent appreciation. "Have you found out yet why you are too good for us?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Of course not; for it isn't true."

"Ah, then you are still in love with Broadway. I thought a week ago, at the supper, that the glamour was wearing a little thin."

"No. It was just that I had things to think about."

"What were they?"

"Well, for one thing, I wondered what had happened to you in those three weeks on the road."

He turned quickly, almost sharply. "Who has been saying——?"

"No one has said anything," she interposed. "I just felt it."

"Oh! What was it you felt?" His tone was all friendliness again.

"I don't know. You were changed. It was a little—" she conquered her reserve with an effort. "Well, you see, when you went away we were old friends and I knew you very well indeed. And then, that night, I suddenly realized that you were a stranger, that I didn't know you at all."

"But now you know that that was a mistake, don't you?—that we are the best kind of friends and very intimate?" he asked, persuasively; but, after facing it honestly, she had to shake her head.

"No. I dare say you know me, but

I don't know you at all. Perhaps I never could. Don't you see—" she frowned earnestly over the explanation—"it is as though I could only count one, two, three, but you could use one-half and seven-eighths and all sorts of compound fractions. I can't keep up."

"Keep up! I should like to make it my life work to—" his eyes rested reflectively on the sweet and sturdy profile—"to prevent your ever learning fractions," he added, and they both laughed.

Rose's voice broke in on them. "Little California," she called, "how did you do it? Evvy hasn't been seen to laugh for a month."

"I don't know," said Judy, "but I think he was laughing at my arithmetic."

"Mine is just as funny—probably funnier; but I never thought of trying that," Rose complained. "I have tried everything else, haven't I, Evvy? But he has been beyond human aid—the polite blues, that never give you an honest chance to say, 'What on earth is the matter?'"

"Well, I should think he would have them," put in Polly. "By the way you cling to the centre of that stage, Rose Barron, one would think you were gummed there. Evvy is always being crowded into corners and speaking up stage—the house never gets a glimpse of his face. It's enough to make anyone blue."

"Well, I am a star," protested Rose. "What do you expect?"

"I didn't expect anything else," said Eveleth, gloomily. "I have been there before."

"Let's all cheer him up," suggested Simeon, emerging from his devotion to Mrs. Froley with obvious relief. "We will each do something to entertain him, and the one that makes him laugh loudest gets a prize."

"What?" asked Polly.

"Thrifty Polly! I don't know yet. Who will begin?"

"Oh, you and Polly do your German opera," suggested Mrs. Froley, with sudden interest.

Polly smiled shrewdly. "Ah, but that would mean changing seats again, and we are so comfortable!" with a side glance at Lord Merrington.

"I will do, 'I am dying, Egypt, dying,'" said Simeon, looking at Polly so expressively that she relented.

"Well, come over here and we will do opera—if Lord Merrington doesn't mind changing again!"

"Not at all, I'm sure," was the placidly cheerful answer.

"Evvy is smiling already," said Rose, innocently. "Follow it up quickly, children."

It was Judy who laughed hardest at the miniature vaudeville that followed. Rose contributed the "human 'cello," and Mrs. Frolely gave a wicked imitation of "Rose in the third act."

"I have found out what is the matter with amateur performances," Judy exclaimed, drying her eyes. "They ought always to be done by professionals!"

"But then they would scarcely be amateur, would they?" suggested Simeon, in the tones of Lord Merrington, an imitation of which he alone was smilingly unconscious.

"Little California hasn't done anything," put in Rose, hastily. "Now don't protest. You can at least recite 'The Wreck of the Hesperus.'"

"Little California!" chorused the others, rhythmically.

Judy's eyes turned to the wooded landscape for inspiration. The cool air against her cheek, the smell of earth and leaves and the quick pad of the horses' feet brought a sudden flood of feeling—not homesickness, but home love. With her face turned from them she began to whistle her bird symphony, twittering, calling, weaving the ripple of the meadowlark in and out of the forest chorus and coming with a rush to the final trill of ecstasy. There was a shout of applause, a clamor of joyous excitement.

"She wins!" cried Rose.

"But I didn't make him laugh," Judy protested.

"No; but you almost made him cry,

and that is better yet," Rose insisted. "Doesn't she get it, Evvy?"

"She gets every good thing we can give her," he assented, as the coach turned into the drive of the Summer hotel where they were to lunch. "You have piped away all my troubles; they have gone and drowned themselves like the rats."

"And you are perfectly happy?" asked Judy, a little wistfully.

"More than tongue can tell," he answered, taking her hand to help her dismount.

She slipped her arm through Rose's as they went up the steps to the empty piazza. "What a heavenly time we have had!" she said, impetuously.

VII

THE hotel was nearly deserted. A few relics of the departed season huddled in corners and stared critically or enviously over their fancy-work as the coach load took possession of the big hall. Rose was recognized at once in a running whisper that spread from group to group, though she seemed entirely oblivious of the fact, or of anything but that she wanted her luncheon at once. There was a general scramble to serve her, and presently they were seated at a table in the empty dining-room, and a deep silence had fallen over them.

"It isn't a party just now, it's food," Rose apologized, with a long sigh of satisfaction. "Even Evvy is eating," she added, a few moments later. "Little California, you have made him human again. What shall the prize be?"

"Suppose we give her Evvy," suggested Polly, who had been fairly purring over her lamb chops and creamed potatoes.

"Oh, beautiful!" Rose shouted, with laughter. "Just the thing—Polly always hits it. Don't you think that's perfect, Evvy?"

Judy, sitting opposite him, winced without knowing why at something in his face, a look that was gone before

she could be sure it was not her imagination. An instant later he was smiling across at her with uplifted glass.

"What do you say, Miss Kent? May I be your prize?"

"If I deserve anything so munificent," she smiled back.

He looked about the table, his glass still raised. "Is there anyone here who can show just cause why I should not be this lady's prize?" His glance stopped at Rose; but she was laughing in a whole-souled way. "Then here's to us, Miss Kent!" And they drank together to seal the compact. As he put the glass down the shadow crossed his face again.

"Well, that did kill conversation," suggested Simeon, after another silence.

"Some conversations are better killed," said Mrs. Froley, drily; and Judy realized that her brief moment of importance had not endeared her to the lady of the Egyptian gaze. "As the chaperon of this party, I feel called on to ask when we start back?"

Rose leaned regretfully toward the open window beside her, thrusting one hand into the warm tide of sunlight that poured through it.

"I don't want to go back at all," she exclaimed.

"Well, why should you?" said Mr. Kellogg, promptly. "Why not stay overnight? There is no lack of accommodation here, and I will get us a private dining-room. Would it amuse you?" He had an air of putting the whole hotel at her disposal, and her vivid eyes widened joyously at the prospect.

"How beautiful! If that isn't exactly like you! Everybody! Did you hear?"

They echoed her enthusiasm, bursting into a babel of plans.

"Nance can come down on the train and bring us a bag full of things," Rose added. "Simmy, go and telephone her. She can stop at Belle's house if there aren't enough of mine."

"What sort of things?" asked Simeon, rising.

"Nance will know," was the severe answer.

"Oh, that kind! I thought maybe you wanted party gowns and blouses—blooses—whatever you call 'em," he apologized. "Don't let anyone swipe my salad, please. I'll tell Nance to provide for four."

Polly's lips opened to call something after him; then she abruptly closed them again, with a sharp sigh. Every one shouted with laughter.

"Why didn't you say it, Polly? Are you losing your nerve?" Rose asked.

Polly drew down discreet eyelids. "I think I'd better not," she admitted.

"Well, if Polly thinks that, for pity's sake don't urge her," murmured Mrs. Froley.

When they rose from the table, Mr. Kellogg went to make arrangements about rooms, and Eveleth followed Rose to the porch.

"That is a pleasing little lake down there," he suggested. "Come and let me row you about on it."

She protested lazily. "You—row! Don't be hypocritical, Evvy. You know very well you would lie back and smoke; and presently I should be doing the rowing."

"And think how delightful you would look, bending to the oars, your hair doing little damp curls on your forehead." He moved very close to her, and his hand fell over hers on the railing. "Come and play with me, Rose! You have neglected me frightfully since you acquired your friend Kellogg." She drew her hand carelessly away.

"I have to be nice to him to-day, Evvy—considering it is his coach."

"I am vastly more entertaining," he pleaded. "I can always make you laugh, and you know you love laughing. He is only rich."

"Well—but you know I love coaching, too," said Rose, light-heartedly. "I have promised to walk with him. Go and row little California—she's a great deal nicer than I am."

He turned abruptly away, his eyes hard and angry, but she did not notice.

"Judy Kent," she called; "Evvy is

going to take you rowing. I hope you realize just what that means."

"It means that you are the nicest girl here, Miss Kent," Eveleth interposed, with a laugh. "I swear to do every bit of the work. Will you come?" His manner was unwontedly energetic. A moment later he had his hand under Judy's elbow, and was running her down the path to the boats. Rose looked after them with a slight lifting of her eyebrows. Then she shrugged and turned with a smile to Mr. Kellogg.

Their walk ended at the first bench they came to, on a sunny green bank above the lake. Rose leaned in one corner with an arm along the rustic back and a white parasol behind her head, and smiled as he seated himself, heavily, prosperously, beside her.

"We compose very well in the landscape, you and I," she said. "Don't you think we add to the picture?"

"You are always the whole picture, everything you do," said Mr. Kellogg.

She laughed. "You are not a bad bit of landscape architecture yourself, you know," she suggested.

He moved an inch nearer. "Very good of you to think so," he said, comfortably.

Rose suppressed a yawn, and glanced inquiringly about the lake. A boat drifted into sight along the opposite bank, with trailing oars. The occupants sat facing each other, both with their elbows on their knees and their chins on their knuckles. They seemed deeply absorbed in their conversation.

"When will you teach me to drive four-in-hand?" Rose asked, abruptly. "You promised."

"To-morrow, if you like—and every other day, if you'll come. The coach is yours, you know."

She held up one exquisitely kept white hand, and bent it critically on its rounded wrist.

"Do you think that is strong enough for four?" she asked, anxiously.

"Let me see." He put out his hand toward it, but she drew it away, with a half smile that obviously indicated, "No, you don't!"

Mr. Kellogg moved another inch nearer. "Can't trust you with the horses unless you let me try your wrist," he persisted.

A ripple of laughter came across the lake from the drifting boat. Rose moved impatiently.

"Very well, then I won't drive," she said; but she mitigated it with a glance.

"Look at them like that and you won't need muscle to drive them—they'll do anything you say," lumbered Mr. Kellogg.

"Then you couldn't use blinders?" said Rose, prosaically.

"Oh, yes! blinders couldn't shut out eyes like yours. Feel them through anything." And Mr. Kellogg moved still nearer.

In the boat opposite, Eveleth was evidently being his most delightful self; both were too absorbed even to wave to a friend on the bank. Rose kicked irritably at the turf underfoot. It was right for Eveleth to do what she told him, but he need not do it quite so thoroughly!

"You have rather nice eyes yourself, you know," she said. "They're a much brighter brown than mine, aren't they?" She lifted hers gravely.

"Can't tell about mine—can't think of anything but yours." And Mr. Kellogg's arm stole along the back of the seat. Rose leaned forward, as though not noticing, a disconsolate frown gathering in her averted eyes. Eveleth had been so moody lately, she had half forgotten his charm. Evidently he was himself again. And she could have been enjoying life on the lake instead of—

"We might have gone boating ourselves," she said.

"But it's pretty nice here, don't you think? I'll take you boating next Summer in my yacht."

"I do love yachting," said Rose, wistfully; but her eyes were on the boat opposite.

"Well, you can make it yours. I'll take you anywhere you say—ask your own crowd."

"Oh, but how beautiful!"

He smiled complacently at her enthusiasm. "Better than a row-boat—though I bet they don't think so just this minute," with a nod and a laugh for the boat nosing against the other bank. "Eveleth's pretty hard hit, isn't he?"

Rose stared at him.

"Eveleth! With—little California?"

"Surely. You don't mean to say you haven't seen it. The others all have—say he's cracked about her. I don't blame him—very fresh, pleasant sort of a girl." Rose had recovered her self-possession, though her eyes still looked dazed.

"Of course she is, the dearest girl possible! Only, one doesn't think of Evvy as going in for the *grande passion*, does one?"

"Oh, quiet chaps like that always get it hardest," Mr. Kellogg assured her. "He's done for, all right; I know the symptoms. Can you guess why?"

"Because you have had them—oh, so often in your career," laughed Rose, getting up. "Come and walk. I am tired of this particular outlook, aren't you?"

"I couldn't be tired of any outlook that had you in it." And Mr. Kellogg rose with regretful effort.

When the white parasol had disappeared among the trees, some of the gaiety in the boat seemed to die out. Presently Eveleth bent to the oars again and sent them flying through the water, while Judy, leaning back in the stern, smiled at the world about her in happy silence. When at last a slight bump told her they were back at the landing, she rose regretfully, giving Eveleth both her hands.

"Hasn't it been a beautiful time!" she said, her honest blue eyes lifted straight to his.

His face softened; for an instant he looked half ashamed.

"You dear child!" he said.

VIII

"LET's dress up for dinner," suggested Polly. The four women were

in Rose's room, lingering over a tray of tea.

"But we haven't anything to put on," said Mrs. Frolely, who was lying across the foot of the bed with her head on her arm.

"Well, then, we might take something off."

There was a general laugh.

"Polly always was resourceful," said Rose, shaking her splendid brown hair down over her shoulders. "Nance brought an armful of kimonos with her—we might make it a Japanese dinner."

Polly scrambled up, excitedly. "Oh, Rose, do! I am a dream as a Jap; only, we'll need some make-up."

"Probably Nance brought it. She knows us!" Rose pushed open the door of the adjoining room. "Nance! We are going to dress up for dinner."

There was a slight grunt from within. "I knew that, child, before I started." And Nance appeared with a box of cosmetics and hairpins and a handful of artificial flowers. "Didn't have room to bring you much," she added.

"Nance, you're a wonder!" exclaimed Polly. "Let's see the kimonos. Oh, those two are Belle's; I recognize her serpent-of-the-Nile designs. Belle, did you ever choose anything that hadn't a snake in it somewhere?"

"I don't think you could describe Herbert as having a snake about him," drawled Mrs. Frolely. "If he had, I might find him more amusing."

"Or he might find you more," supplemented Polly.

Mrs. Frolely shook her head. "Husbands never find one amusing."

"Oh, Belle, don't be so pessimistic!" exclaimed Rose, who was seated before the mirror, trying Japanese effects in hair-dressing.

"I'm not. I am merely truthful. It is marriage that's the matter, not Herbert. It spoils everything. A lover greets you with 'dearest' and 'beautifullest,' and pleasant things like that; after a year of marriage, he says, 'Good evening, Isabel,' and

marches up-stairs. Heaven knows what it will be after three years."

"Probably 'Good-bye, Wasabel,' and a march to Dakota," said Polly.

Judy shouted with the rest, and hated herself for a secret shrinking. "I am a little backwoods prig," she thought, angrily. The brief depression vanished when she found herself in a kimono of rose-pink crêpe shading to faintest blue and embroidered with gold butterflies. Nance fastened pink roses above her ears, and Rose reddened her lips and gave her eyes an almond slant.

"It is a bath-wrapper at home, but it makes a very handsome dinner gown. Little California, you are pretty enough to eat," Rose commented, with kindly, smiling eyes. Judy furtively pressed her cheek against Rose's arm for an instant.

"I am having such a good time—and it's all you," she said, impetuously. Rose laughed and kissed her, and presently sent them away.

"I wish to burst on you all at once, a vision of loveliness," she explained. She was still laughing at Polly's parting comments when the door closed behind them. No one could have seemed gayer.

"What's the matter, Miss Rose?" asked Nance.

Rose put her arms about the gaunt form. "I don't know, Nance. Nothing, I fancy. Why did you ask?"

"You can't fool Nance, honey."

Rose rocked gently back and forth. "It aches so, Nance! Please rub it," she said, whimsically. Then she lifted her head with a long sigh. "Men aren't much good, Nancy. Don't believe in them. You think you've got them just where you can put your hand on them at any moment, then you turn your back a half-second—and it's all to do over again. They're a mean lot. Now, make me as stunning as you can; this is going to be my busy evening."

Dinner was to be served in the private sitting-room at the end of their suite. The men, who had been waiting more or less impatiently for an hour,

sprang up in amazement when four smiling, delightful Japanese ladies trotted in and made deep obeisance. There was a shout of applause.

"I knew they'd do it, some way or other," exclaimed Simeon. "Polly, you are the sweetest Jap dolly I ever saw. Can't I kiss you?"

"God knows, you are stronger than I am," quoted Polly, ostentatiously keeping the table between them.

Rose, in a white kimono embroidered in scarlet and gold, with scarlet flowers in her hair, had come in last, and stood smiling in the doorway. Her eyes sought Eveleth's, but he did not answer her smile, and there was an unexpected flash of hostility between them. She gave him a derisive nod, and his cool, deferential bow seemed to say, "Look your loveliest—it is nothing to me!" Her intention swung about like a weathercock, and her eyes grew reckless. She turned to Mr. Kellogg, who was unmistakably dazzled, and slipped her hand into his.

"Come, you are going to sit by me," she commanded. "There is no use struggling," she added. "I am a spoiled Japanese beauty, and I insist." And Mr. Kellogg, who was tripping over his feet in his eagerness, laughed with suddenly restored complacency.

Eveleth had already taken possession of Judy. "May I sit by you, Judy San?" he asked. "I suppose you will cry for rice and milk and a chocolate éclair. Do you think you can make out without them?"

She glanced at the raw oysters and the three small glasses in front of her. "If it is a coffee night, I can. Do you suppose it is?"

"Oh, yes! Kellogg is frightfully rich—he can afford anything." She looked across at him, heavy, complacent, leaning very close to Rose's shoulder, a slight flush on the big, smooth oval of his face, in which the features seemed to be set too high, leaving an unnecessary expanse of blank, unmodulated chin.

"I don't like him," she said, impulsively. Eveleth stretched his hand under the table and took hers.

"You are a discerning young woman," he said.

"Oh, look at them, already!" shrieked Polly. "Evvy, if you hold hands at the first course, *what* will you do at the last?"

The color flashed into Judy's face and her whole being winced for an instant.

Eveleth was quite undisturbed. "Wait and see," he suggested.

"Polly mustn't—she is too young," put in Mrs. Froley. "As a married woman—" And the tide drifted away from them again.

"Don't mind, Miss Kent," said Eveleth, cheerfully. "Polly is a vulgar little beast, but so are we all, for that matter. You might as well find us out."

"Prude! Prig! Backwoods!" was singing through Judy's mind. "Oh, I am not really so outrageously proper," she protested. "Really, I am quite human."

"I suspected as much." Eveleth held up a wine-glass. "Suppose we drink to—our common humanity." Judy lifted her glass. "To the merry devil within," he added, as the glasses touched.

"Long may it waver!" laughed Judy.

Eveleth's eyes were on her face. "It is waving now—two red flags," he said. "Do you know, the first time I met you—that Sunday afternoon at Rose's—you blushed about something, and Rose put her finger on your cheek. I have seen your color rise a great many times since then, Judy San, but never without wanting to put my finger in the middle of it."

"Well, why didn't you?" she asked, with an air of innocence unconsciously borrowed from Polly.

"I was afraid it would—make you stop blushing."

She considered it seriously. "Do you mean you would harden my young character—or that my fine nature would scorn to put further temptation in your way?"

"All the fine nature in the world couldn't keep you from putting temptation in my way, Judy San, while you

have those adorable, honest blue eyes with the clean, healthy little devil in them—a little devil only just awake, half bewildered, but very glad to be there! And I am always wondering if your chin would not exactly fit the palm of my hand. See," he held it out, curved, before her; "don't you think they were made for each other?"

"Pit it out in papa's hand, Doody," called Polly, and a wave of laughter and shouted repartee drowned all coherent talk. Only Rose and Mr. Kellogg stayed out of it, talking in absorbed undertones, apparently unconscious of the rest. The glasses were filled and refilled with startling rapidity. Judy scarcely touched hers, but there was a more dangerous wine tingling in her veins. And she must not be a prude, out of her foolish ignorance; so she shouted with the rest, and hid fiercely, even from herself, her shrinking at the flushed faces and reckless tones. This was the world, the brilliant world that she had longed for! She was not going to miss her chance through country-bred squeamishness.

"Change partners," shouted Polly, suddenly. "Every man move up two places." Rose glanced up and her eyes met Eveleth's. The change would put him in Kellogg's place.

"We are entirely comfortable as we are, Polly," she objected. "Don't upset things."

"I will move if I may take Miss Kent with me—not otherwise," said Eveleth, placidly.

"I refuse to give up my partner. We are having a beautiful time, aren't we, Lord Merrington?" Mrs. Froley appealed.

"Rippin', I am sure," was the stolidly cheerful answer.

Simeon burst into loud weeping. "I am the only one who isn't popular," he wailed. "Everybody but Polly wants to stay out—nobody loves me. I wish I was dead!"

"Oh, Simmy—dear Simmy!" Rose and Polly both put their arms about him, patting and comforting. "It's all a mistake—everybody loves you, Simmy! We all want to sit by you."

Simeon rocked back and forth between them, still inconsolable.

"Of course he isn't going to cheer up while he's getting that," said Mr. Kellogg, trying to speak lightly, though his eyes glowered at Rose's white arm on Simeon's collar.

"Well, who would?" retorted Simeon, beaming with sudden impudence.

Rose drew away. "I think he'll do now," she said, drily.

"But there might be a relapse—poor Simmy!" And Polly took her coffee with her round pink face against his shoulder.

Presently Rose sprang up. "I want to dance," she exclaimed. "Have the table taken away. Oh, if we only had some music!"

"Music?" Mr. Kellogg rose at once. "I'll see what I can do." By the time the room was cleared he was back with two Italians, each with a violin.

"You are too wonderful!" Rose exclaimed. "I believe, if one asked for the moon, you would look at your watch, step out and get it."

"I would if you asked for it." And Mr. Kellogg radiated satisfaction.

The musicians were established in the next room to leave more space. Judy secretly rejoiced in the knowledge that she waltzed remarkably well, but she quickly found that this accomplishment would not be needed. Rose caught her hand and whirled her down the middle of the room; then the four kimonos began circling and swaying about Simeon Knowles.

"Kotow, kotow to the great Yen How,
And wish him the longest of lives,"

they chanted, while Simmy folded his arms high on his chest and eyed them haughtily.

"With his one little, two little, three little,
four little,
Left little, lone little wives!"

They had flopped softly on their knees before him, their foreheads to the floor.

"Go on, do it again! I like it!" said Simmy.

"It's my turn. Do it to me," demanded Mr. Kellogg; but the music

had changed and the line was skipping madly up and down with Simeon in the lead, Judy as reckless as any of them. Her feet seemed inspired; they knew a hundred little steps and twirls that she had never dreamed of before. All self-consciousness, all her half-shy reserve, fell away from her; she was only a crazy little geisha, wild with the joy of dancing. First one caught her hand, then another, skirt-dance followed cake-walk; now they had fallen into a big circle and were dancing hand in hand, each according to his pleasure; the circle contracted till they were in a laughing bunch in the middle of the room, then an arm seized her and whirled her away, and presently it was a triumphal march with quick, sharp steps and imaginary banners waving. The others stopped now and then before a side table crowded with bottles and siphons, but Judy was conscious of nothing but the sound of the violins and the spirit in her feet.

It was a knock at the door that finally broke the enchantment. The proprietor was apologetic, deferential—but the lady in the room below was complaining; could they, perhaps—a little more quietly—he was sorry to ask it—

Rose, who had opened the door, was all smiling courtesy and promises; then the door closed and Polly relieved her feelings by jumping up and down hard in one spot.

"I'm hoping this is right over the old cat's head!" she announced.

"I'll take her feet," declared Simmy, and jumped vigorously opposite her.

"She couldn't be that long," Polly objected; and the two wrangled the matter, still jumping, till the distance between them was no more than a foot. Then he deftly caught her up, there was a spring and a quick swirl, and she was perched on his stout shoulder, bowing and kissing her hand.

The others shouted with laughter, but Judy felt suddenly cold and a little sick. People who were complained of in hotels—she had always looked down on them from an im-

measurable distance. What had seemed gay became all at once rowdyish, the red faces and loud voices were horrible to her clearing senses. Rose, amused and uncritical, had nevertheless kept her head, and Eveleth was his imperturbable self, but the rest were obviously—Judy's fresh, clean, country soul turned in anguish from the discovery. Lord Merrington walked unsteadily, Mr. Kellogg, standing beside her, laid his hand on her arm. She shrank away. It was like the shame of a bad dream, that plunges one half-clothed into a public street. "I don't want to be here!" was her passionate thought.

Mrs. Froley switched a garland of artificial flowers across her face, with an insolent laugh. Polly, riding joyously with one hand clutching Simeon's hair, shouted to her.

"Little California, come on up! Mount her, somebody, on the other shoulder."

"Come on! Step lively, lady!" cried Simeon, puffing but valiant. "Plenty of room in the front of the car!"

"One little, two little wives," sang Polly, drumming with her heels.

"Quit that or I'll drop you," commanded Simeon, clutching at her feet. The struggle became uproarious, others joining in, and Judy, unnoticed, slipped through the long window to the balcony outside. Her cheeks burned with a mortification she could not analyze; an unbearable sense of being degraded clung to her like a soiled garment.

"I hate them, I hate them!" she gasped. "Oh, why did I come?" She started at a step beside her.

"Don't mind—it is only I," said Eveleth. "Are you tired, child?"

The kindly voice was too much for her unstrung nerves. She put out her hands to him, not knowing what she did.

"Oh, Evvy, I don't like it!" she half-sobbed.

His arms closed about her, very gently. "Of course you don't, dear little girl," he said. "Don't mind.

You see, you are a lady, and—Polly isn't, that's all. Now do you know why you are too good for us?"

"Not for you and Rose!" She was still clinging to him, conscious only of the healing comfort he had brought, her face lifted with the earnestness of her protest. She looked very little and young in the soft kimono with the roses half falling from her hair. Eveleth drew her closer.

"I am so sorry. I know it hurts," he whispered. "Don't go back there—slip in your own window. I am going to get away myself very soon. Don't worry, dear child—it's all right." He bent down and kissed the curve of her cheek. "Good night, Judy San."

She stole away without a word, and he waited till she was in her own room that she might not hear the burst of laughter and comment that would greet his reappearance.

IX

JUDY slept very little that night. Nance's phrase beat through her thoughts with dreary persistence—"the kind that gets hurt." Was this what the wise old woman had meant? Assuredly, she was hurt, unbearably. The brilliant world that had condescended to admit her had turned at a touch into a cheap and vulgar little crowd for which any well-bred being was too good. Rose was still her big, beautiful, unmarred self; but how could she bear them? The remembrance of Kellogg's touch was like a stain on her arm, that she shuddered away from in vain. Yet through all her misery of offended maidenhood ran a curious thrill of exaltation. Eveleth's arms were still about her, his lips against her cheek. "Good night, Judy San!" The words seemed to be a talisman against pain, and she whispered them over and over till at last they brought a dim comfort, and she fell asleep.

The earliest sunlight, fresh and clean as spring water, was bubbling through the window when she awoke.

Crisp and still and frostily fragrant, the morning was irresistible. A cold bath seemed to wash the horror of the night away, leaving only the secret exaltation. She dressed and hurried down through the quiet halls to a side door. Opening it was like a plunge into a mountain lake; the brilliance of little waves seemed to flood about her, the tingle of strong swimming was in her fingers. Beyond green stretches glowed the Autumn woods in the softer brilliance of their dim rose and pale saffron mood; curled and brittle leaves crackled under her feet. It was, after all, a good world, out of doors. Her heart turned back to the land of gaunt, bare mountains and aromatic underbrush, to the solemn aisles of the redwoods and the print of wild feet in the brown earth, with a longing that was like physical sickness. Oh, for the movement of her good horse under her, the clean west wind in her face, a stalwart woodsman beside her on the trail! The last thought startled her. She certainly was not homesick for Johnny. "Good night, Judy San," beat thrillingly in her ears. Both these men had kissed her. Johnny's, "Forgive me, dear old chap!" and his badly concealed triumph made her smile as at an episode of her childhood; Eveleth's kiss had set the world reeling.

She left the hotel grounds and presently turned down a quiet lane, eager for a close look at a beautiful young horse, intricately booted, which was following a groom with the free and leisurely stride of blood and breeding. A nearer view brought a puzzled frown. Of course it was impossible; and yet no one in all the valley at home knew the famous young Border better than she. She had rubbed his soft muzzle when he was not a week old, riding over to the Rice stables with Johnny for the express purpose, at the invitation of the owner. She had superintended his education, perched on the fence surrounding the half-mile track, while Mr. Rice, leaning beside her, dilated on points and pedigree. Later, Border had been brought at regular intervals to call on her, as a serious

tribute to her intelligent appreciation, and once or twice, when the way was clear and the road-bed in proper condition, had spun her down the county road for a breathless half-mile, the stop watch clutched in her hand and her whole being a silent shout of delight. And now he seemed to be coming to meet her, three thousand miles from home—the same perfect bay coat, the point of white between the eyes, the unmistakable line of head and shoulder and flank. She could only stand and stare.

"Well, my Lord, if it ain't Miss Judy!"

Judy started, and for the first time looked at the groom, a spidery little man, so round-shouldered as to be almost humpbacked, whose shrewd, greenish eyes were beaming at her out of a wizened red face.

"Sam!" she cried, putting out her hand. "Why, where on earth did you come from, you and Border?"

"Californy." Sam's grasp would have crushed a less sturdy hand. "Me and Border have come on for the Horse Show; Mr. Rice, he's here, too. Well, it does seem natural to see you! Stoppin' down here?"

"Just over night." Judy was patting and feeling the proud Border in a way he evidently recognized as initiated, for he stood contentedly, sniffing at her sleeve. "The old beauty! It's so good to see him, Sam. Tell me about everybody." Her voice sounded homesick.

"Well, your mama looks real well. Don't see so much of Mr. Meldrum nowadays." Sam's eyes were delicately averted. "Lumber business don't keep him up there as steady as it used to—he's down in 'Frisco considerable. He got over his accident fine."

"Accident?" Judy's face was lifted abruptly from Border's neck. "What accident?"

"My Lord, didn't no one write you about that? Well, 'twasn't so serious, neither; but it might have been." Sam backed up against a tree for support, letting Border thrust his critical nose into the grass. "It was like this.

Some folks came up from the city to see the lumber camp and the mills, and Mr. Meldrum was doin' the polite with them blue roans of his and the high spring wagon. 'Twasn't like him to have the harness out of shape, I will say, but when they was comin' at a good clip down the Gulley road—and right beyond the first turn, mind you—the nigh horse stumbled pretty bad—you know he always did stumble, that Pete. I could have broke him of it in a week, but Mr. Meldrum, he——"

"Yes, yes! and——"

"Well, the rein just snapped like a piece of string—and this comin' licketty cut down the Gulley road! If it had been the other rein, he could have swung 'em up onto the bank, but as 'twas, a pull would have sent 'em all over the edge to kingdom come. You remember when Fish's boys went over there, horse and all? They never——"

"Yes—but what did he do?" Judy's fingers were twisted tightly into Border's mane.

"Well, the roans bolted, of course, and the women begins hollerin'. He yells to 'em to sit tight, and then, Miss Judy, he ups and over the dashboard down onto the pole with the roans runnin' like rabbits, and he gets 'em both by the bits with a leg over Pete to steady him, and he has 'em stopped up against a bank in a quarter of a mile. But the horse fell on him at the end and bruised him some; he was limpin' for a week or more. Those city folks—my! They thought he was the finest ever."

"Oh, it was fine, it was just like him," exclaimed Judy. "And how he would hate the fuss afterward!" She laughed excitedly.

Sam's puny red face nodded at her shrewdly as he drew Border into the road again.

"He's a lot of a man, Miss Judy, and don't you forget it," he said.

When he had gone on, Judy turned slowly back to the hotel. The picture was vividly before her; the steep Gulley road, the frightened roans, Johnny's quick, strong movements, daring but

cautious, his face grimly set, as she had seen it more than once.

"Oh, he is a man!" she exclaimed, with a sudden new appreciation of what that meant. She thrust away the unwelcome thought that Eveleth could not have done it. "Physical strength and courage aren't everything," she told herself, impatiently; but all the traditions of her training rebelled at this. "Well, he would die without making any fuss," she argued. "Or jump and save himself?" suggested some unwelcome intuition. "It isn't true, it isn't true!" she cried, under her breath; but the beauty of the morning was dimmed for the moment.

Then, looking up, she saw Eveleth himself, lean and listless, with drooping shoulders and hair prematurely gray, cross the hotel porch and turn down the path. "*Good night, Judy San!*" The color flashed into Judy's cheeks, her heart seemed to beat in great, single throbs. She longed to run to him, yet something made her dart into a side path and hide behind a clump of bushes, her trembling fingers twisted tightly together. His face, as he passed, looked pale and tired and not happy, and her whole being ached with her longing to comfort him. The picture on the Gulley road was forgotten. She stood and watched him, her palm pressed against her cheek, until he had disappeared down the road to the station. At that moment there was nothing in the world but the gentleness of his arms about her, the tenderness of his voice—"Good night, Judy San."

X

THE ride back to town was a silent one. Eveleth had already gone by train, leaving a note of excuse, and the others, all but Rose, were savage or pensive, according to temperament. Rose seemed as fresh and gay as ever, but after a few attempts at rallying the rest, yielded to the general depression.

"All you need is a few black plumes and a funeral march," she commented.

"Oh, Rose, be still," pleaded Polly, pressing her knuckles against her temples. "If you are too thick-skinned to appreciate the 'cold, gray dawn of the morning after,' at least respect our finer sensibilities."

"Everybody hates everybody," added Simeon, gloomily; and they laughed reluctantly, then relapsed into silence.

Twelve hours of healing sleep set the world straight for Judy, and she fell vigorously to work. In a week the play would be ready to submit; and in two weeks her money would be gone. She accepted the situation stoutly, frowning down a secret clutch of fright.

"Be a sport!" she told herself. All the biographies of success showed just such struggles with poverty and fate. Her way had so far been abnormally easy, with Rose's encouragement in her ears. "The child wonder of the Pacific Coast!" She laughed at the phrase, but it was an excited laugh.

After a strenuous morning she went out to buy some lunch, but brought back instead a magazine containing a full-page picture of Eveleth.

"I wasn't hungry, anyway," she explained to herself, over two stale soda-crackers and a glass of water. Then she went back to her writing, but as the afternoon wore on it halted more and more; she re-read the finished scenes with growing mistrust.

"I wonder if it is no good at all—if I am a little fool?" The thought brought a chill of desolation that would not go away. When dusk came she threw herself face down on the bed, discouraged, heartsick, and miserably frightened. Brave and determined sentences shaped themselves on her lips, but the spirit within was as forlorn as a lost child.

A knock startled her to her feet. She opened the door, and, as the lank form of Nance emerged from the darkness of the hall, she could have wept with joy and relief. All Nance's laconic severity could not hide the warm human kindness beneath; and Judy was sorely in need of human kindness at that moment.

"Nance! Come in; I am glad to see

you," she exclaimed, with an eagerness that betrayed more than she knew.

"Evening, Miss Kent," said Nance, sedately. "I brought you a note from Miss Rose. She wants an answer."

Judy lighted the gas and broke the note open with an excited conviction of good news. She read:

DEAR LITTLE CALIFORNIA:

Do you want a job? I told the management about your whistle act, and they think that we might run it in in the wood scene, where I am waiting for Evvy. You needn't go on, you know—just stand in the wings and pipe. Want to? Your salary won't be large, but it will be at least visible to the naked eye. Be at the theatre seven-thirty, to try it on.

ROSE.

Judy looked up with a shining face. "Oh, will I?" she cried. The joyous relief in her voice pieced out the meaning the wise old eyes had been reading in the bare, dingy room, the tin kettle and the empty cracker-box and the table strewn with manuscript.

"Pretty hard work, writin' plays," Nance suggested, when Judy had scribbled an answer.

"Indeed it is, Nance. One almost gets—discouraged." This was distinctly confidential, from Judy; but hunger for sympathy was even stronger than her instinctive reserve at the moment.

"That's so. I s'pect your mama's real proud of you." Nance did not miss the slight hardness that came into the girl's face.

"Oh, she doesn't think much of play writing, I'm afraid!"

"Well, mothers don't, sometimes," said Nance, vaguely, rising. She paused before a photograph of a pleasant old gabled house, heaped up and running over with vines. "You must have a lovely home out there."

"Yes, it is a lovely home," Judy admitted. "There are roses up to the roof, and I have a horse to ride and a big room with five windows." She glanced about the grubby cell with its one window opening on rear walls; then she laid her hand on her manuscript and smiled brightly. "But I'd rather be here, Nance!"

"Well, I s'pect you would!" And Nance took her departure, shaking her head soberly in the dark of the hall. "City's full of 'em," she muttered; "new crop every year—Lord help 'em!"

Happiness and a good dinner made Judy as brave as a lion. She piped and trilled in the empty theatre, and the management nodded a tolerant approval. The fate of the play was still uncertain; they were ready to add anything that might appeal to popular favor. She was offered the smallest possible salary, which she accepted at once with an exultation severely hidden at the time, though it crept out afterward in the seclusion of Rose's dressing-room.

"You see before you a member of the famous Rose Barron company," she announced, drawing herself up and saluting. "I go on at nine forty-five evenings and three forty-five matinées—at least, my whistle goes on; and I get paid for it! Isn't it bully?" She seized Rose's hand and kissed it, then turned away, blushing like a school-boy. "Don't mind me—I'm no end of a goat," she muttered, in apology.

Rose caught and pulled her back, laughing. "You funny child!" she exclaimed. Judy's upward glance was half ashamed but half impish. Rose kissed her flushed cheek. "See that you behave, or I will have you fired from my company," she said, sitting down at her dressing-table to add the last touches to her make-up. She was simply dressed in country white for the first act; her gorgeously came later.

"What's behaving?" asked Judy.

"Being just as bad as you know how," said Eveleth's voice, from the open door. "Isn't it, Rose?"

Rose's eyes had narrowed a little, but she did not turn her head. "I am afraid little California doesn't know how at all," she said, coolly. "Why don't you devote your spare time to teaching her?"

"Oh, do!" said Judy, consciously little-girlish—a new accomplishment.

"I can't fancy a more delightful occupation." And Eveleth dropped lazily down on the hard, chintz-covered lounge. "I have a great deal of spare time in this play; I sometimes think of going home and to bed between my appearances. Will you amuse me every evening, Miss Kent?" His half-shut eyes met Rose's in the mirror, but were instantly averted.

"Do, my dear, and we'll double your salary," Rose put in, studying herself impersonally with a hand-glass. "It is so important that the leading man should be kept amused and happy!"

Nance had appeared in the doorway with a box, obviously of flowers. Eveleth took it from her and carried it over to Rose.

"Yes, my dear Rose, a leading man's feelings are always important," he said. She lifted her eyebrows slightly, but made no other reply as she uncovered an exquisite bunch of pale-lavender orchids. The card was in an envelope, which she thrust into her gown, unopened.

"How careless of you," he commented. "If you lost it you would never know whom they were from."

"Oh, I dare say my heart would tell me," said Rose, with a shrug.

"Hearts are unreliable authorities. If it is too sacred to be read before us, we can—ah, here is your call. May Miss Kent and I stay here?"

"Of course, gladly." Rose was brushing the orchids caressingly across her lips. "Here, Nance, put the darlings in water. I will wear them in the third act." She hurried away, and Nance took the flowers somewhat disrespectfully, thrusting them into a tumbler with her lower lips contemptuously protruded.

"Some folks is too rich to be any good," she muttered.

"Nance, you are the wisest woman in the world," said Eveleth, throwing himself down beside Judy. His cheerfulness seemed to have vanished with Rose.

"H'm! Wisht I could say you was the wisest man, Mr. Eveleth," she said, not unkindly, turning away to busy

herself with Rose's gown, which hung behind a chintz curtain at the other end of the room.

"I am glad of it," said Eveleth, with a sigh. "Wouldn't you hate to be as wise as Nance, Miss Kent?"

"No; I'd love it. Then I'd know things that bother me now."

"What things? Perhaps I can help."

"Well, whether I can write plays, for one."

He looked grave. "That, of course, I can't tell you. You care very much?" She nodded silently. "Ah, I wish you did not! So few can do it, and so many want to."

"But some must succeed—why not me?" She spoke bravely, though she had grown a little pale. "Oh, I must, I really must!"

"Then of course you will," he said, quickly. His hand closed over hers on the couch between them. "I am sure you could do anything you set out to do, little California!" His smile cleared away the momentary depression. "What else bothers you?"

Judy's heart seemed to be beating down in the hand that lay under his. She must take it away, of course—in just a minute.

"There is still—that night, you know," she said, with averted eyes. "You can't guess what a country prig I seemed to myself, even when I hated it most. I have thought and thought; my mind believes I am in the right, hating it, but I feel all in the wrong! Perhaps being a—lady isn't so important as—oh, I can't explain. But I wish I understood."

"I know. Sometimes it must seem as if the—not-ladies got more out of it," he said, sympathetically. "But you can't help it, you know; you will go the way you were born and bred." He held her hand closer. "Don't worry, Judy San. We know that we like each other, you and I, and nothing else matters, does it?"

Judy smiled happily. "And we both love Rose and hate Mr. Kellogg," she added.

He glanced at her sharply, but her

face was entirely innocent. "Quite true!" he agreed. He let his head fall back on a cushion, and stared thoughtfully into space. Judy drew her hand away and felt a momentary pang that he made no effort to keep it; but a glance at his face made her forget her own feelings.

"You're tired," she said, speaking with boyish abruptness, because the personal was always so difficult to her.

He pressed his palms to his forehead. "Yes, Judy San, I'm tired and I'm——"

"Call for Mr. Eveleth!" sounded in the passage outside.

Eveleth drew himself up lazily. "It is just as well, you know," he said. "I believe I was about to weep on your neck. Au revoir, Miss Kent."

Rose came back at the end of the act, but Eveleth did not appear again until it was nearly time for Judy's performance. He made a pleasant pretense of being vastly excited, offered her drinks and smelling-bottles and insisted on feeling her pulse, while Rose, looking on, laughed and abetted him, seemingly at her gayest. She was on the stage when Eveleth led Judy to her place in the wings and gave her her cue with a whispered, "Now!"

Surrounded by the crude backs of canvas trees, Judy began her bird calls, a little tremulously at first, but piping with growing courage as she forgot the scene about her. She was back on the trail with the birds answering from branches far beneath and the sun steeping the sage and everlasting, her horse moving against her knees; only, it was Eveleth who rode beside her. The last trill brought a strange sound, like an exaggerated rustle. She opened her eyes with a start. The house was clapping, and Rose, on the stage, was smiling at her. Hidden from every one but Rose, Eveleth bent over Judy's hand and kissed it lingeringly, then took his cue and stepped out on the stage. The quarrel scene that followed was played with unusual spirit.

Judy went home with her heart singing. Some—poor wretches!—had

to work for their living, but she could get hers by way of the most delicious play in the world. Her long mornings over her manuscript were, after all, only a beautiful game, with never a dull moment; and when night came she could sing for her supper with dear people to smile at her and be glad about it. In the dark of the hall she pressed the back of her hand to her cheek, then to her lips.

"Dear, dear, *dear!*" she whispered, when the light flared up on Eveleth's portrait.

XI

JOHN MELDRUM cut through the thin streams of anxious travelers that crossed to and from the trains, and made his direct, unhurried way to the street. People instinctively stepped aside for him, or turned to glance a second time. In spite of his conventional clothes, there was something in his big, yet lithe, frame, his tanned face, his keen, deliberate eyes, wholly free from nervousness or self-consciousness, that marked him apart from the rest. The tide of puny and careworn clerks going to their homes at this hour made him seem like a mastiff among terriers.

After a glance half-amused and half-disgusted at the tangled traffic of Forty-second street, he looked about for the nearest possible hotel, with some dim idea of keeping near the point of escape; then he made for it with a calm disregard for traffic that caused some heartfelt swearing on the part of harassed drivers. John Meldrum was not accustomed to the indignity of dodging and leaping for a mere horse, and did not intend to begin now. He stood civilly for the trolley-car to pass, but horseflesh must wait on his convenience—which it did, hauled abruptly to its hind legs. The comments, though deep, were not too loud; Johnny looked entirely capable of defending his own methods.

After a bath and dinner, he asked a policeman which direction was downtown and which east, and started out

as confidently as he would have crossed a strange wood after a glance at sun or moon. Drivers hunched on top of waiting hansoms held up an inviting forefinger, but did not tempt him. "I'd as lief ride in a sunbonnet," was his inward comment.

The thought that he was less than a mile from Judy quickened his stride and set him smiling to himself. For the moment, the anxiety that had harried him into coming was forgotten; he could think of nothing but alert blue eyes, a brown-cheek childishly curved, a sweet, honest mouth over a determined chin, gallant, boyish shoulders, strong movements, a frank smile—his fingers clenched suddenly into his palms.

"My girl!" he said, under his breath.

The block to which the address led him brought back his anxiety. Even in the lamplight it seemed dreary beyond bearing—mean little shops huddled between crumbling old brownstone houses, a stable crowding a new flat building, high and narrow, latticed up the front with fire-escapes. A frowzy head thrust out of a lighted window made him frown sharply. Judy's few letters had said nothing about her manner of living; yet he knew she had very little money. How was she staying on, week after week? Mrs. Kent, in her vaguely dismal way, seemed to have washed her hands of the matter. Judy always "got along some way"; she had "a good home to come to any minute, but if she chose to go running about the country, it was her own affair"; nowadays a daughter seemed to think she was to gratify every whim, no matter what it cost. Meldrum had ended his call abruptly, but he was back again the following week, and the week after. When it was obvious that Judy was being left wholly to her own resources, he arranged his business affairs for an absence of several weeks, and left for New York.

The old, four-story house at which he finally halted was a little less forlorn than its neighbors, though dingy enough. The servant who answered

his ring told him that Miss Kent had already gone to the theatre.

"She don't go on till after nine, but she's generally up there early," she added, with Irish sympathy for his disappointment.

"To be sure," said Meldrum, calmly. "Just what theatre is it? Oh, yes, the Columbian. Thank you."

He hurried away in dread of what she might tell him. Judy on the stage! Hundreds of strange men and women staring at her night after night, paint on her face, dressed in exaggerated finery or in—

"My God!" he exclaimed, wrathfully, stopping short.

"Keb, sir?" said a voice above him.

"Yes; Columbian Theatre—quick."

And Johnny stepped into the hansom without a thought for the indignity of being aproned in, the reins out of his reach.

For an interminable hour he sat cramped in an orchestra chair, his eyes fixed on the stage, yet wholly unconscious of what was going on there. Every entrance gave him a stab of fright, followed by a deep breath of relief as Judy did not appear. The people about him laughed, or cried, or clapped, but at what he neither knew nor cared. He was waiting, blind and deaf to everything in the world but the misery of suspense. It was long past nine now. His fine, sound, reserved, out-of-doors Judy! How could she bear it?

The scene changed to a green and tangled wood. The illusion was good enough to give Johnny a pang of homesickness. Some one in white seemed to be watching and listening. A hush fell, on the stage, on the house. His heart seemed to stop beating; he knew now that she was coming. Then, clear and fine and sweet, out of the green depths came a whistled call. Bird answered bird, and the meadow-lark fluted up and down among them till the tiny chorus rose to a final ecstatic trill, and seemed to end among the branches. The audience laughed and clapped, but Meldrum sat rigid—shaken, glad, breathlessly homesick.

A sudden tide of elemental feeling made his muscles tighten with a sense that he could remove mountains for his love. He left the theatre and found the stage entrance.

"I have come for Miss Kent," he said, a ring of mastery in his voice; he meant far more than the conventional phrase.

Judy's gasp of excitement at Meldrum's card was followed by a moment of dismay. Her world was perfect as it was; she dreaded any new element. A week's salary already lay in her purse, to-morrow she was to read her play to Rose; and over everything was the glamour of Eveleth's devotion. She tried not to think presumptuously, to keep down the beating of her heart with the fact that he was "very kind;" yet she could not ignore that even with the glorious Rose present it was to her that he constantly turned. She was living a fairy-tale, and the entrance of Meldrum's practical, vigorous personality seemed to threaten its delicate fabric. Then she was ashamed of her reluctance, and ran out.

"Johnny Meldrum!" she exclaimed, with both hands outstretched, and at sight of him, splendid of physique, simple and manly and frank, all her mean little complexities vanished, leaving only honest delight. "Dear old Johnny," she said from her heart, "I never was so pleased in my life! How did it happen?"

"It didn't happen." He was smiling down on her. "I brought it about myself. Come out and have supper or something. Isn't there a place near here where we can talk?"

Something in his voice gave Judy a tremor of fright, but she talked intrepidly over it as she led the way to the nearest café. A raised balcony at one end offered a measure of seclusion among its artificial palms. Johnny drew up to their table with a smile of satisfaction.

"It is like our little bats in San Francisco," he said. "Don't you wish this was the Palace grill-room?"

"Indeed I don't," she answered. She prolonged the ordering as much as

possible, but at last he laid down the menu and confronted her with hands thrust into his pockets, his chair slightly tilted.

"Now, then, Judith Kent, tell me the entire story of your life," he commanded.

Her eyes curved into a mischievous smile. "But you know I am such a reserved little cuss."

"Not with me, old chap—please," he urged, gravely. "I have come three thousand miles to find out. You wrote me that Miss Barron had encouraged you and that you were writing a new play; that is absolutely all I have got in answer to nine letters."

"Well, I fancy that is about all there is to tell. Let's begin on bread and butter—I'm hungry."

"I want to know what you have been living on."

"My kind and generous mother—until this week." She put her hand proudly on her purse. "Want to see my salary?"

"I suppose you think it is none of my business." Johnny's tone was startled. The idea had evidently just occurred to him.

"Indeed, I don't! It's bully of you to care." Judy spoke with remorseful warmth. "You see, my expenses are almost nothing—you saw where I live! That is why I could stay so long."

"And of course you have your fare back; you could always go home," he conceded.

She tried to say, "Of course," but her tongue refused the lie.

"Only, I won't be ready to go till I have something to show for it," she said, hastily. "You know I have to support myself; and why should I work for my living when I can play for it?"

"You are happy?"

"Happy?" Her voice thrilled at the word. "I am so happy I could stand up right here and yell!"

His face clouded. "Because of your work, and the encouragement?"

"And the excitement. And knowing different kinds of men and women. Oh, Johnny, this is life!"

"And yet you are homesick sometimes?" He spoke dejectedly; his head dropped forward.

"For the mountains, and my horse—and for you, yes; oh, frightfully, at moments. I want to ride down the redwood cañon trail, and go fishing up Silver Creek, and climb Mount Grizzly in a soupy fog with the sun coming out clear on the top and the west wind straight off the ocean!" An excited color had risen in her cheeks. "Oh, Johnny, I love that best, but everything I want is still—here."

Their supper had been placed in front of them, and he served her mechanically.

"Then I suppose there is nothing for me to do but go home," he said, at last. "I can't help you and you don't want me—yet." His eyes were so compelling that she had to look up, though her own quickly fell again. "You are going to care for me some day, Judith Kent," he went on, quietly. "When the glamour of all this wears off, you are going to come back to me—just as you are coming back to the mountains. We have a stronger hold on you than anything here. We'll wait."

"No, no!" She spoke hurriedly, almost angrily. "It is not true—you mustn't think it. You will always be my very best friend, but—"

"Well, wait and see," he interrupted. His calmness exasperated her.

"There is nothing to wait and see about," she exclaimed. "You have no right to take that tone. I don't care for you and I never shall, and I resent it!"

He grew pale, but made no answer, and Judy's wrath died down to remorse.

"Oh, I'm a beast," she muttered. "Don't bother about me—I'm not worth it." He smiled at her, reassuringly, and went on with his supper.

"Well, then, I think I'll hit the trail for home in the morning," he said, presently. She protested, but was inwardly relieved. They became unexpectedly gay over their dessert,

laughing and reminiscing as if nothing had happened. When, on her own steps an hour later, she put out her hand for good-bye, he held it for a moment. He was standing below her, and their eyes were on a level.

"Judy, is there anyone else?" he asked.

"No," she said, quickly; but the color surged into her cheeks. "No, Johnny, truly," she pleaded.

He pressed her hand between his palms. "Good-bye, dear girl. If you need me at any time——"

"Yes, I know," said Judy, grateful but restless. She was impatient to get back into the fairy-tale.

XII

JUDY awoke to a Sunday morning of brilliant sunshine and the thrilling consciousness that she was to take her play to Rose at two o'clock. Already Johnny's visit seemed remote and unreal; she scarcely gave him a thought, except when a striking clock reminded her that his train was leaving. She spent the morning pottering over her manuscript, forced down as much lunch as her happy excitement would allow, and started for Rose's apartment a half-hour too early, so that she had to walk very slowly and even go round the block a couple of times at the end.

Rose was in a little lounging-room that opened off her sitting-room, gorgeous in the scarlet-and-white kimono, her brown eyes brimming with kindness. She pulled Judy down and kissed her; Rose was incapable of the jealousy that hates its rival. All her fury would be for the man, not for the chance object of his defection.

Polly was seated on the foot of the couch, and made a pretense of leaving.

"Though I don't see why I can't stay and hear it, too," she complained.

"It will bore you," Judy protested; but she was secretly pleased.

They were a stimulating audience. Rose's expressive face changed with

every demand on it, becoming amused, uplifted, distressed, vindictive or rapturous as the action proceeded. Polly gasped loudly at the dangers and chuckled at the witticisms, breaking into a loud cheer when Judy, flushed and trembling, threw down her manuscript.

"Well, she is a child wonder!" was her exclamation.

"Oh, there is far more to it than to the other," Rose was saying. "Why, there is action every minute. I don't see how you ever worked it all out by yourself!" They fell to discussing the various scenes, emphasizing their praise with an occasional criticism. It was perhaps the happiest half-hour of Judy's life.

"I'll tell you who ought to do it—Miriam Walsh and Roy Kennedy," Rose said, finally. "It wouldn't do for me; that wants a stock company. But they would be great in it. Can't you see Miriam holding off the strikers?"

"And Kennedy with a bandaged head—Kennedy's head always gets bandaged before the evening is out," said Polly.

"I can help you to meet them. I've known them for years," Rose added. Disappointment was swallowed up by new hope before it could make itself felt. Judy did not realize that her play was rejected, only that there was a fresh prospect for it.

Nance's knock finally interrupted them.

"Comp'ny, Miss Rose," she announced through the door.

"Let me stay here; I want to make some changes," Judy begged. "Oh, you have been so good, both of you!"

"Nonsense. We have had a beautiful time," said Rose, as they left her. She was sorry she had stayed when she heard Eveleth's voice in the next room. The proposed changes became suddenly less interesting and she listened wistfully, wondering how soon she could follow. She could hear their words distinctly through the door, which was not quite shut.

"This isn't fancy dress;" Rose was

evidently explaining her kimono. "But we have been hearing little California read her play, and I hadn't a chance to dress."

"I am glad you had not," said Eveleth, in the tone of obviously empty flattery with which he had lately exasperated Rose. "How was the play?" There was a moment's pause. Judy waited, smiling, for the answer.

"Rotten," said Polly, in a penetrating whisper.

"Oh, Polly!" protested Rose.

"Well, wasn't it? Did you ever hear anything much worse?"

"But she is such a dear child. What does it matter if she can't write plays?" Rose argued.

"Did you tell her it was bad?" Eveleth asked; his voice sounded amused.

Polly sighed. "Oh, no; we slobbered all over it. She's a dear kid—we had to. But Rose is going to turn the thing loose on some one else. I call that unfair."

"Oh, I will only introduce her. Miriam will understand," said Rose, easily. "It is so much better to learn things gradually than to be knocked down with them."

"Why is it so bad?" Eveleth asked.

"Why is my singing so bad?" Rose's voice suggested a shrug. "Because I can't sing! She hasn't any real talent; it is just a jumble of other people's ideas and youthful enthusiasm. But she is so dear and serious about it. I am very fond of that child."

"She's all right," echoed Polly.

Judy sat on the edge of the couch, very still and very white. She felt no anger, only a great and bitter humiliation. So she was, after all, a little fool! They had known it all along, but because she was "a dear child"—she pushed the manuscript passionately from her lap and buried her face in a cushion. She seldom cried, but now hot, bitter tears welled up in her eyes and slowly brimmed over. She sobbed with a sudden longing for Eveleth, for the kindness of his voice, for the gentleness of his arms. After all, even if she could not write plays, he was still there. She seemed to curl up against

him in her misery. "Good night, Judy San." The phrase still held mysterious comfort.

Presently Polly took her leave, and a silence fell in the other room.

"Do you want tea, Evvy?" Rose's voice suggested a suppressed yawn. "I will make Miss Kent come out and amuse you."

"That would be delightful," agreed Eveleth. Judy, in an anguish of dismay for her tear-stained face, did the only possible thing—flung herself back with one arm over her eyes, the other hanging from the couch as though in the relaxation of sleep. She heard Rose laugh softly from the doorway.

"Come and look at her," she whispered. "I don't blame you, Evvy!"

"Blame me for what?" asked Eveleth, coolly.

"Well, let us say for knowing a delightful girl when you see her." They drew away, leaving the door half open. "I haven't the heart to wake her. You will have to put up with me for awhile."

"You are very good to put up with me—I who have neither coaches nor yachts nor orchids."

"But you can make me laugh, Evvy." A curious softness, half mischievous, had crept into Rose's voice.

"You can make me cry, Rose!" From under her arm Judy could see them, standing facing each other, Rose leaning against the back of a chair. There was a tension in the air that made her heart beat heavily.

"Then you do still like me a little, even though your heart is given elsewhere?" Rose asked, pensively.

"Even though I have been cut out by a prosperous rival."

She hesitated, her eyes on her slipper. "It may amuse you to know, Evvy," she said finally, with an affectation of shyness, "that I—I got rid of Mr. Kellogg day before yesterday. Orchids are all very well, but, oh, he did bore me!" She lifted her eyes, and the laughter left them as they met his.

"Rose!" He put his hands on her arms. Hers were doubled against her breast. Her lips were half parted,

her head was thrown back from her soft throat. "Oh, my Rose, truly?" It was a new voice, sharp and vibrating. His hands crept up to her shoulders, then drew her into his arms. It seemed an eternity before his face was lifted from hers. Then he threw back his head with a quick laugh.

"Oh, Rose, it has been a devil of a week!"

"It has!" she agreed. She was still in his arms, her cheek against his coat. "I thought you were frightfully in love with Judy."

"I hoped you would."

"Meanness!"

"You deserved it, bad girl. Oh, Rose, my beloved!" He swept her up close against him. "How could you hurt me so?" She tipped back her head that he might reach her lips, but he kissed her throat first.

"Ah, there's no one like you, Evvy, no one, no one—I can't do without you!" she said, breathlessly.

He drew her away to a couch at the other end of the room. Their voices came dimly, with occasional laughter and long silences. And Judy lay with her fairy-tale in tatters, too desolate for tears. When both rooms were dark she summoned her courage and stood up with obvious rustling. Rose called to her, teasingly.

"Be a sport!" she warned herself, and laughed with them over her unexpected nap.

"Don't run away," urged Rose. Her eyes were big and luminous in the half-light, her cheeks flushed. She was so beautiful that all Judy's hot resentment died down. How could anyone not love her! Eveleth, kindly and silent in the background, shed a disarming cordiality. Judy went away feeling very little and lost.

"It wasn't their fault," she told herself. "I didn't know what love was, that was all. He was only kind and friendly. Love is something different." The memory of his voice, quick, almost rough, made her catch her breath. There was no healing left for her in "Good night, Judy San." That was what one said to a dear child.

XIII

It seemed strange to have no occupation in the morning; stranger still to have no dreams. Judy took Eveleth's picture from the wall and did it up with her manuscript, placing both in the bottom of her trunk. No reviving hope came to suggest that her critics had been wrong about the play; some instinct told her their judgment was true. It seemed now as though she had known it all along—that her inspiration was only enthusiasm and a jumble of other people's ideas; as though she had consciously pretended to titles that were not lawfully hers. Neither artistic success nor the love of men like Eveleth was for ignorant country girls. They were only "the kind that gets hurt."

"I want to go home!" she cried, suddenly. Then she set her teeth and scowled. "Oh, be a sport!" she commanded.

It took all her courage to enter the theatre that night. She had waited until the last moment, when Rose would be on the stage, and intended to slip away immediately after her performance; but Nance was waiting for her with a note.

"Don't run away," she read. "Supper later—my party—must have you. Rose." And she ended by staying, chiefly because going back to her dismal little room seemed just then worse than any ordeal she might have to face.

There was no need of feigning good spirits, for Rose was too madly gay to be discerning. She came in with a rush, seeming to fill the room to the very corners with a tangible current of vitality.

"I've got them to-night, Nance—they're standing on their heads for me!" she cried. "And I'm going to keep them, too. There'll be five curtain calls after this act. You'll see! Oh, they can call it a flabby, weak-kneed play if they like, but if we can only get them into the theatre, I can keep them!"

"You'll keep 'em waiting if you don't let me dress you," grumbled Nance.

Rose frankly made a face at her, but submitted.

"Do you know what is going to happen at the supper to-night, little California?" she went on, presently, her head and arms emerging vigorously from a seething mass of white frills that proved to be a petticoat. "I can't tell you about it yet, but somebody's engagement is going to be announced—somebody you know."

It seemed to Judy as though her heart dropped like a stone; but pride helped her to look up with a smile.

"I think I can guess whose," she said brightly.

"No, you can't—you mustn't, you mustn't!" Rose's hands were flapping the air, her symbol of desperate excitement. "It is to be a surprise. Promise you'll be surprised!"

"Surprised to death," agreed Judy.

"Belle is coming, and everybody. Oh, Nance, do stop fussing—I am standing still. Only it's such a beautiful world, I have to be noisy." She gave the old woman a tempestuous embrace. "Do you think I am 'no end of a goat,' Judy California?" she asked, with her deeply curved smile.

Judy got up impetuously and under pretense of straightening an end of lace, put her arm for a moment about Rose's shoulders.

"I think you are splendid. I am glad you're happy," she said, jerkily, with averted eyes.

Rose patted her hands. "God bless little Judy and make her a good girl," she laughed caressingly. "Now, Nance, am I all together? I must fly."

The room seemed suddenly small and dull when she had swept out. Judy waited apathetically, finding herself suddenly too unutterably tired for further feeling. Nance, who was picking up scattered garments, glanced at her keenly once or twice.

"Headache, Miss Kent?" she asked, finally.

"Oh, no. My head never aches." Judy roused herself to smile. "Nance," she went on presently, "if Miss Rose were to—marry, she wouldn't leave the stage, would she?"

"Miss Rose won't never marry," said Nance, with decision. "She likes her work too well for that. What'd she do with a husband around under foot and babies spoilin' her looks? No, Miss Rose ain't one to marry."

"She doesn't know," thought Judy, and relapsed into silence.

The supper was in a glass bird-cage hung with green vines, conventionally known as a palm room. The others were already there when they arrived, Polly's pink face over a flaring tulip bow suggesting the bodiless cherubs of the old masters; Mrs. Froleigh tightly swathed and glittering in expensive disregard of the bouffant draperies of the season; Lord Merrington serene, satisfied, apparently not an inch nearer to or farther from the ultimate subjection demanded of him; Simeon Knowles very beaming and giving an intangible effect of being much dressed up; and Eveleth looking on through his single eye-glass, kindly and apparently unperturbed. Judy felt a pang of loss that the glory of associating with them had been so tarnished. She was conscious of hoping that they would not be too conspicuously noisy as she found her place at the round table reserved for them.

To her it was an interminable supper. Rose prolonged it as much as possible, and many a meaningful glance passed between her and Polly, who was evidently in the secret. Simeon seemed to feel the excitement, too, but Eveleth looked on with his fine calm, evidently not in the least nervous at the coming announcement. He talked to Judy in a friendly but abstracted fashion; she felt that though his face was toward her, his spirit was wholly turned to Rose on the other side. He knew, without looking, when Rose's napkin slipped from her lap. As he stooped for it, Judy saw his cheek touch her knee for a second. Rose turned to him instantly.

"Happy, Evvy? Having a good time?" she said in a quick little half voice. If he answered in words, they were too low for anyone else to hear.

"Will it never be over!" thought

Judy, desperately. Every time there was a pause her hands turned icy cold and she nerved herself for the ordeal, but it was not until the supper was nearly over and the other tables were empty that Rose tapped for silence and impressively raised a glass of champagne.

"There is a new toast for you to drink to-night," she began. "A brand-new engagement, one you will all be very glad about, I know, because it means the happiness of two people who—oh, Polly, you do the rest!"

Polly rose slowly and so did Simeon. They took hands and smiled foolishly.

"Well, it's just that I am going to marry Simmy," said Polly, and sat down abruptly amid general excitement. They threw her the flowers that decorated the table, they drank to her sitting, they drank to her standing, to the deep interest of the waiters. And through all the babel Judy was conscious only of breathlessness and a vast relief. At least she need not face it yet; perhaps it would not be so hard when Rose was ready to tell. The reaction from suspense brought an excitement that was very like high spirits.

"Now all give me the inevitable advice and get it over with," said Polly, when they had subsided. "Belle, you are the only one present known to be married; you shall have first turn. What is your advice to a young woman about to enter the wedded state?" Mrs. Froley's black eyelashes drooped; the thin scarlet line of her mobile lips took a cynical curve.

"Learn solitaire," she said, drily. Of course, they shouted. Belle was always sure of her laugh.

"Oh, dear, I don't like it," Polly protested. "You can keep your old advice. If Simmy isn't absolutely devoted every moment we're off the stage, I'll know the reason!"

"But he will be," they said in chorus, with an effect of having rehearsed it, while Simmy's plump cheeks dimpled absurdly under his twinkling black-currant eyes.

"Well, he'd better," Polly said. Then she smiled confidentially at

them all. "Isn't it fun? If I had known it was so nice, I'd have done it long ago."

"But I didn't ask you long ago," Simeon objected.

"Oh, no—but with somebody else," said Polly, placidly. "I am glad I'm not such a great artiste that my career won't let me marry. Rose, honest! Don't you wish you were a little scrub like me, and could get engaged and marry and take a flat and have a wedding-ring and a—and all sorts of things? Stop laughing, all you! I am serious. Truly, Rose, doesn't your greatness look sort of cold and thin beside being—Mrs. Simmy?"

Judy glanced sharply at Rose, but her face showed only amusement.

"But since I couldn't be Mrs. Simmy anyway—" she began. "No, marriage isn't for me, my child. I love my freedom too well."

Eveleth's face showed no more self-consciousness than hers.

"How they can act!" was Judy's wondering thought.

When they rose, a little later, she made her way to Polly and took her hand.

"I am awfully glad for you, you know," she said, with her direct smile. "I envy you, even if Rose pretends she doesn't."

"You're a nice girl," Polly squeezed the firm brown hand in both her little soft white paws. "But Rose isn't pretending, you know. She hasn't any use for matrimony, and I'm glad of it. Her career is too big a thing to monkey with."

"But some day she will care a lot," Judy ventured. "And then—" Polly shot an odd glance at her.

"Oh, yes, Rose might—care," she assented, vaguely, and edged away from the topic.

"Nobody knows yet—nobody but me," thought Judy, as she said good night.

XIV

A GOOD-BYE note from Meldrum, written on the train, seemed to Judy

like a door shut in her face. It was courteous, considerate, full of good wishes; but the old cordiality of spirit was gone. Remembering how she had met his advances, she could not blame him; but she laid the note in her trunk beside the manuscript and the picture with a sense of having lost the best friendship of her life.

"Everything is leaving me—everything," she muttered, dropping the lid. Tears rolled down her cheeks, but she struck them away. "What's the use of crying? What's the use? what's the use?" she insisted, setting her teeth.

Since her work had been taken from her all the charm had gone from her room, leaving it just the dreary hole it was. Judy spent as little time there as possible. After a day or two of aimless wandering she took herself firmly in hand and began to look for work—work whereby she might earn enough to take her home. Admitting defeat seemed a comparatively small trial now; and a room with five windows had suddenly come to have a new meaning. Even teaching in the valley school did not look like such a bitter fate, when one could live with open fires, and have a horse to ride, and escape to the mountains or the woods between-times.

"I don't believe I am so very much in love with Broadway," she said, with a smile that tried to be cynical but was only rather forlorn.

As the result of a week's search, she secured some circulars to address for a jeweler. There were three thousand of them, and the task took four solid days. She had earned three dollars.

"I really think writing plays would pay better, if one could do it," she decided. Judy was trying to take her lot humorously these days. That harmonized with her ingrained idea of being "a sport." She put the money into an envelope on which she printed in neat, square characters, "This way for the West-bound Limited." Then she went to play her small part in the Saturday matinée. Her bearing was still gallant.

"Considering I have a broken heart and a blighted ambition, I am doing pretty well," she told herself, with a smile into a chance mirror. She needed all her bravado for her daily meetings with Rose and Eveleth. They had offered no confidences, but it amazed her that all the world did not see what she saw in every glance they exchanged. Rose was so gloriously gay, it was impossible to grudge her anything that was hers.

They were always unfailingly, if carelessly, kind to Judy. When she left the theatre late that afternoon, Eveleth joined her and walked down the street beside her.

"How is the young playwright?" he asked.

"Dead and buried," she answered, glad of the early darkness that veiled a shamed flush.

"Dear me! How did it happen?"

"Well, I have found another field for my talents, one where they promise to accomplish more," she said, with a grim memory of the circulars. "I feel I shall reach a bigger audience in my new work."

"Ah! you are doing stories—a novel?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Not exactly. But it is a secret; I shall not give you a hint until I become famous at it."

"I fancy that won't be long to wait." He smiled down at her delightfully. "Tell me this much—it is writing of some sort?"

"Yes, it is," she admitted, stretching her cramped fingers, which still ached from clutching the pen. "Oh, it's writing!"

"I shall perish of curiosity," he said, in his most tranquil tones. "You might tell me, you know; I have no secrets from you."

"No?" The bravado even enabled her to lift a mischievous glance at him. The glance she met was disturbing; it seemed to her, for the instant, both startled and unfriendly.

"None, I assure you," he answered, suavely.

Judy, in anguish at having seemed to rush in, caught at any way out.

"Then Rose didn't tell the truth," she said, guilelessly. "She told me you had once written a play yourself, and that it had been put on in London."

He laughed, evidently relieved. "But that was not a secret—though I wished that it had been when I saw the press notices. It ran three weeks—limped, rather, and staggered, and finally fell dead, to every one's vast relief."

"Didn't you feel cut up about it?"

"I dare say, though I have quite forgotten. One doesn't remember one's sorrows of ten years back."

"Really?" Her voice was wistful. "How long do they last, then—broken hearts and things?"

"I should say from three weeks to—at most—a year and a half."

She shook her head. "Not in California, I'm afraid. It takes us longer. We—"

She broke off abruptly. "What is it?" she exclaimed.

They had turned into a side street, for the moment nearly deserted, and under a lamp was a struggling group. It proved to be a hulking great boy grappling with one half his size and pounding him unmercifully. She turned to Eveleth, sick with rage.

"Oh, come quick—make him stop!" she exclaimed.

He put his hand on her arm and drew her toward the other side of the street. "Better not get mixed up in it," he suggested, his eyebrows drawn up in distaste for the scene. The big boy delivered a vicious kick and the child screamed. Judy wrenched her arm away.

"You're not going to let that go on!" she cried, her eyes blazing with anger. Eveleth's expression was bored, annoyed; but in a flash of intuition she understood the incredible truth. She could not put it into words that he was afraid; it was too shameful. But her shocked eyes could not be ignored.

"My dear Miss Kent, I am not for taking part in street rows," he said, irritably. "I will call a policeman—if you wish to take charge of the case." And he turned back to the corner.

She let him go without a word. Then she went quickly toward the struggle.

"Here, you stop that!" she said, sharply, and there was a fire in her eyes and voice that made the fellow hesitate. "Let that child go at once, you great brute!" she stormed. "Aren't you ashamed—a little fellow like that!"

The boy began a loud defense. "Well, I don't care, he——"

"Never mind what he did," she cut in. "Don't you ever touch him again as long as you live. I should think—" But her audience had vanished, the sobbing victim scuttling off quite as fast as his assailant. A figure in uniform was coming down the block. Judy could see a long, slim shape following, but she slipped across the street and out of sight as fast as her trembling knees could carry her. All her outraged traditions were crying shame upon Eveleth; she did not feel that she could ever look him in the face again. The sure knowledge of how Johnny would have disposed of the situation made her catch her breath and clench her hands in helpless rage. And she had believed that her heart was broken because of this thing, this bloodless automaton who was afraid of a hulking boy and unmoved by a human outrage; who went for a policeman when the moment called for masculine dominance.

"Oh, I want a man, a *man*!" she cried in her heart. The last shred of the fairy-tale had vanished. She stood hurt, humiliated, infinitely sore-hearted, but once more free and whole. Her simple code made no allowances; Eveleth's charm could never touch her again. She took his picture from her trunk and tore it into shreds.

"There's an end to that," she said, throwing the bits viciously into the waste-basket. "Rose is a thousand times too good for him. Well, I've got her left, anyway—Rose and my salary. Everything else is gone." Then her eyes glowered again. "Wouldn't Johnny have settled that boy!" she muttered.

XV

ACCORDING to her traditions, the disgraced Eveleth would do everything in his power to avoid meeting Judy till time had softened the affair, and she made it easy for him by staying in the theatre only long enough for her performance, the next few nights. She did not forgive him what she unpromisingly called his cowardice, but she grew cool enough to wonder over the occurrence; for a certain human kindness had always seemed to her Eveleth's dominant trait. He had certainly been very good to her when she was troubled.

"But, after all, it was only in words and manner; he never had to do anything unpleasant or anything that took courage," she reflected. She realized, too, that it had not been right to make love to her for Rose's benefit. "He happens to have a kind surface; he likes to be kind when it is easy and pretty; but he never thinks of one thing but self, self," she decided, hotly.

A friendly note from Rose, demanding to know what had become of her, took her up to the apartment late one afternoon. She had not been there since that cruelly enlightening Sunday. Rose had not mentioned the play since, having evidently quite forgotten it, to Judy's deep relief. This afternoon she was lounging in an elaborate tea-gown of white lace, fresh from a bath and a horseback ride, a little subdued, for her, but not less lovely on that account. Judy looked down enviously on her lazy contentedness.

"All you need is a deep purr," she said, dropping on the floor beside the couch.

"I'm no cat," Rose protested, gently pulling her hair. "What's the news? Did you know that Polly and Simmy are to be married next month?"

"Lucky children," said Judy, idly.

"Oh, yes! Polly might as well marry, if she wants to." Rose yawned. "But fancy wanting to!"

Judy glanced up at her shrewdly. "You can't fancy wanting to?" she asked.

"Me? Oh, never! Oh, I should say not!" If this were acting, it was remarkably well done.

"But Rose," Judy ventured, "suppose you cared tremendously some day?—and you might, you know."

"Oh, well, even then I think my work would come first," said Rose, rather vaguely, her eyes fixed on the tip of her beaded-bronze slipper. "Besides, I couldn't stand being tied to anyone; I'd hate him in—" She broke off to call, "Come!" to a knock. Judy flushed as Eveleth entered, and started to scramble to her feet.

"Don't get up," he protested, evidently not in the least disturbed by the encounter. "Why, I haven't seen you since our street fight," he added, as he took her hand. "Where have you hidden yourself?"

"Street fight?" Rose demanded.

"Indeed, yes," he said, balancing on the arm of a chair and smiling at them both impartially. "We came upon a young giant thrashing a boy last Saturday, and Miss Kent wanted me to dash in and thrash the giant, who could have made mincemeat of me in three seconds."

"Good press-agent story, though," Rose suggested.

"Yes; but I did not see myself spending the next three weeks in a hospital. So I went back for a policeman—I even hurried."

"And what did Judy do?" Rose asked, mildly amused. Judy was smiling bravely over anger and disgust.

"Oh, she whirled in and beat the big boy herself, in true California fashion, and then she marched him off to jail and the little boy to a hospital, so when we arrived there was no one to rescue. It was rather flat, for us. Aren't you looking rather grand today?"

"Indeed I am; this is my new tea-gown. Judy, you haven't admired it yet."

"But I have been staring my eyes out ever since I came," Judy protested. "I know now what they mean by a 'confection.'"

"I have a grander one yet, just home to-day. Go and look at it in my closet. Nance will show you if you can't find it."

Judy went obediently to Rose's bedroom, where Nance was sewing by the window, and opened a closet door.

"Miss Rose wanted me to see her new tea-gown," she began, peering into the closet depths; then she stopped with a quick breath, the door-knob still in her hand. The color had left her face. What she saw hanging there inside was nothing of Rose's—

"Oh, not that closet, honey—this one over here," Nance exclaimed, rising abruptly. "We just keep any old truck in that closet." She shut the door and drew Judy to the other. "See, here is the new gown; ain't it a beauty? My, Miss Rose spent a fortune on it."

"It's—very handsome;" Judy stared at it blindly. "Thank you, Nance. Yes, it's lovely. Now I must go." She went mechanically through with her good-byes in the other room, her eyes averted, her cheeks suddenly burning. Once outside, she buried her face in her hands for a moment. Everything was clear to her now, horribly clear. No doubt, anyone but an ignorant country girl would have understood long ago. She must not be a prude, she must not judge puritanically, but—

"Oh, I want to go home! I don't like it!" she gasped. The shame of what she had seen clung to her through the streets and up to her own room. Her mind tried loyally to explain and excuse, but her little-girl heart seemed hurt beyond healing by this first encounter with realities.

"Johnny isn't like that," was her passionate thought. A new sense of the big security of his devotion made her turn longingly to the thought of him.

"I supposed that the world was full of men like Johnny—that I'd find them on every corner," she said, humbly. "Oh, I don't believe there is anybody like him! And I've thrown him away." She leaned out of the window into the cold darkness, her

eyes toward the west. "You might write to a fellow, Johnny," she murmured.

In the morning Judy got up to two thousand more circulars. Two thousand circulars to be addressed make a discouragingly big pile, especially when the pay is a dollar a thousand. Her thoughts would not stay on the work, and betrayed her into blunders. Finally she dropped her pen and went to kneel before the window with her arms on the ledge, staring into the rear walls opposite. Her eyes were hurt and bewildered.

"Oh, Rose, Rose!" she whispered, against her arm.

She was still there at noon when a knock was followed by the appearance of Nance in the doorway. Judy flushed, but the old woman entered tranquilly and shut the door.

"Mornin', Miss Kent. Note for you from Miss Rose," she announced.

Judy took it, glad of an excuse to lower her eyes. When she had read it, she looked up with rather a grim smile.

"Well, Nance, so they are going to take off the play this week," she said. "There goes my job!"

Nance was looking with pursed lips at the circulars.

"Beats me why you'd rather stay in New York, you young ladies that comes from comfortable homes," she said.

"But, Nance, it takes money to get back to those comfortable homes," Judy said, involuntarily.

Nance glanced at her keenly, but she still grumbled. "Bet you wouldn't go back if you had a pocket full of money."

The glance had put Judy on her guard. "Oh, I might," she said, lightly. "I dare say I shall before long."

Nance was evidently not convinced. "See here, honey"—she spoke with kindly gruffness—"I got a lot of money laid by. If you want to borrow any, you just say so and take your own time 'bout payin'. Lord! I can spare it."

"Nance, you're an old darling!" Judy squeezed her hand. "I won't forget."

"Well, I mean it, Miss Kent." Nance kept her hand and began patting it. "And, look here, honey," she went on; "there's things in the world li'l girls like you don't just understand—and you take 'em too hard. Miss Rose is a great artiste, and you got to remember that; great artistes ain't just like ordinary folks. And she's the sweetest, kindest, loveliest heart in the whole world. There ain't one mean or ugly thing about her, and accordin' to the way she sees things, she's good. Now I want you to remember that. You can't understand yet, maybe, but you just believe old Nance. She knows a heap. And don't you worry."

Judy smiled tremulously, though she could not speak, and the old woman went away leaving a measure of comfort behind, in spite of the bad news she had brought. All day the words kept repeating themselves, a steady undercurrent to her troubled thoughts, "You can't understand yet—just believe old Nance," and at last she yielded to them.

"There's things li'l girls like me don't just understand," she admitted, with a deep sigh that was partly relief. Her shrinking from seeing Rose changed to a sudden longing for her—kind, beautiful Rose, with her warm heart and her vivid brown eyes. The constraint she had dreaded turned to shy eagerness as she knocked at the dressing-room door that night.

Nance and Rose had been talking about her.

"See here, Miss Rose," Nance had begun, abruptly. "I suspect takin' off the play is goin' to be kinder hard on Miss Kent."

"Why?" asked Rose, absently.

"Well, I don't believe she's got much of anything else to live on."

Rose looked up from the mirror in surprise. "Oh, yes, she has, Nance. She is writing—stories or something; she told Mr. Eveleth so. I don't believe she is poor, anyway—she has good tailor-made clothes."

"Well, she lives mighty poor, I can tell you," Nance persisted; and then Judy herself came in. Rose held out her hand and smiled at her inquiringly.

"You look pale, Judy California," she said. "I'm afraid you are beginning to pine for your native mountains."

"I'm afraid I am," said Judy, holding the soft hand tight for a moment.

"Then I suppose we've got to let you go?"

"Well, not just yet." She turned away with a smile. "I have some work to finish," she added, with a vision of the two thousand circulars.

"Good-paying work, my child?"

"Oh, I shall earn far more by it than I ever should by play writing," said Judy, bravely; and Rose shot a relieved glance at Nance, who nodded reluctantly, with pursed lips.

"I am glad you're getting rich," Rose said. "If ever you are up against it, my dear, you know you are to come to me, or there will be trouble between us!" She laid her hand on Judy's shoulder, and the girl turned to her impetuously.

"I still have you—whatever else goes, I have you," she whispered.

Rose laughed and drew her close for a moment, not troubling to understand. "You funny child!" she said, caressingly.

On Monday morning Judy started out to find work, her purse full of newspaper clippings, her head well up.

"There must be work for energetic young women, even if they can't sing for their supper," she said, decidedly. "You'll admit that, Johnny!" Lately she had fallen into a way of addressing most of her thoughts to Johnny.

XVI

MELDRUM left New York with a clear sense that he was not wanted. The pain of it dominated every other feeling as his train rushed up the Hudson, and he wrote his good-bye letter. It was not less clear when he reached Chicago, twenty-four hours later, but it no longer

dominated; anxiety for Judy's welfare was again in possession. He winced at the memory of that dreary block, still more at something that the street light had shown in her face when he had asked if there was anyone else. What was she facing, alone by herself in that abominable city with no one to look after her? He was not wanted, of course; but if he could keep an eye on her without her knowing it—why, then, if anything happened, he would be there. The logic of this seemed to him so conclusive that he took the first train back from Chicago to New York.

He had no intention of disclosing his presence to Judy, who had dismissed him so uncompromisingly. Yet how to look after her invisibly was a difficult problem. He settled it at last by going down to her lodging when he knew she would be at the theatre, and boldly ringing the bell. As he had hoped, the same kind Irish face appeared in the doorway, and with a few words as possible Johnny set forth the situation, frankly asking for coöperation. He called himself Judy's cousin—that was his one subterfuge; but as Lizzie did not for a moment believe him, there was no deception.

"I want you to meet me as often as you can and tell me how she seems and what she is doing, and to come to me at once if she is in any trouble; but not to let her know," he repeated, when the girl had grasped the situation, and he put five dollars in California gold into her moist palm. Whereupon Lizzie was heart and soul for his cause. He went away somewhat ashamed, but philosophical. Whatever the means, he had to know.

And so in the dull weeks that followed Johnny knew that the play writing had stopped, and about the circulars, and when the theatre engagement ended; he knew that extracts were cut from the employment columns of the papers, with long hours of absence ensuing and weary returns; he followed her brief career as a private secretary and watched over her hours of reading aloud to an invalid. He knew her days of brisk courage and her days of

black depression. He knew what she had for her breakfast and when she did not have any luncheon, and his heart nearly broke to take her and care for her; but still he waited. It was a dreadful time to him, cooped in a hotel room, his whole being rebelling at its cramped conditions while he smoked and scowled at the walls.

Lizzie met him on Third avenue every other day with her report, and her wardrobe blossomed as the rose under his liberality. There was one terrible week when Judy even gave up the dairy dinners, and Meldrum ate his own meals with self-loathing; then came a time of high prosperity, with regular employment in a publishing house, and Meldrum's heart sank even more dismally, seeing her slipping away from the need of him. For Lizzie, naturally, could not tell him of the inner change that had happened since Judy had so summarily sent him away. He saw her as still brimming with enthusiasm, still proudly independent, not wanting him. In his misery and homesickness he was at last almost on the point of giving up and going back. Then the regular work ended, and he knew that Judy had cried—his sturdy, fearless Judy; cried for a long time, so that her eyes were "just turrible," though she had tried to keep her face averted when Lizzie went in with towels. Meldrum's hands clenched with helpless rage.

"My God, I can't stand this!" he muttered. After a sleepless night he took an early cup of coffee and started resolutely down-town. It was only half-past seven when he left his hotel.

Judy herself was up before seven that morning. She prepared some breakfast and forced herself to eat it, though it was hateful to her. Then she dressed carefully, with a contemptuous glance for the pale, dismayed face in the mirror.

"Oh, you *are* a sport," she commented, but her spirit refused to answer to the spur. It was snowing, with a cold wind, and she folded a newspaper into the front of her Fall

jacket for extra warmth. At a quarter of eight she went down the stairs, her bearing still faintly gallant.

"The downfall of the house of Kent," she murmured, with a smile for Lizzie sweeping the hall. Lizzie had shown a kindly interest in her fortunes of late.

The wind seemed to rush through her as she struggled down the front steps. "If I were small enough, I could do the frozen-newsboy act," she thought, still clinging to her flippancy. "Then they'd be sorry." It occurred to her to wonder who would be sorry. Rose—still her dear, big, beautiful Rose, who would help if she knew, but who must not know—was too absorbed in her own life to be sorry long about anything. Eveleth would not care. Johnny—oh, yes, Johnny would be sorry. He might be cold and unfriendly now, he might have completely forgotten her existence; but he would care if she died.

"Wish I could die then and make him sorry," she muttered, vindictively, but with trembling lips. Death, on the whole, seemed to her preferable to the experience before her. But she must eat; and a saleswoman—no, saleslady—earns five dollars a week.

The sidewalk was still uncleared and the snow clung heavily to her skirt. The wind, swirling about the corner, dashed her umbrella from her, sending it torn and broken into the street.

"Well, go, then," she muttered, one cold hand clinging to her hat, the other clutching her skirts. The gale tore her veil loose and her hair whipped her cheeks and blinded her. She started to cross the street, but a warning shout made her dodge back just in time, with a shaft brushing her shoulder; a hansom was almost on top of her. She put her hand on a lamp-post and stood trembling and unnerved, but the hansom did not pass on. Some one seemed to be springing down from it, some one very big and strong and cruelly like Johnny. Nobody had any right to be so much like Johnny. It was too much for anyone to bear. He seemed to want to apologize, or

something. She looked up wearily, without a tremor to warn her. Johnny was looking down at her with tears in his eyes.

"Oh, Judy, my girl!" he cried. "I can't stand it another minute. I have to help!"

"Johnny!" She clutched his coat with her cold hands. "Oh, Johnny, don't go away!" They forgot the snow for a moment; then he put his arm strongly about her and lifted her into the hansom.

"Anywhere," he said to the driver, and the window closed on them with its screen of snow.

"I don't know whether you're real, or if I'm just making it up," Judy faltered, though the hand on hers felt real enough.

"Never mind about that," he said, a little incoherently. "I'm here and you're here, and you are not going to get away again. My dear!" he added, impulsively.

Her eyes fell. "But I'll be late," she said, demurely; "and they fine you when you are late."

"Where?" he demanded.

"I am to begin at the ribbon counter, but if I'm bright I may get promoted to the gentlemen's gloves—because I'm a good-looker. They always put good-lookers at the gentlemen's gloves." Judy's innocent tone echoed that of her saleslady informant. Johnny swore in sudden exasperation, which made her laugh, and then quite unexpectedly she found her eyes wet.

"There is to be no more nonsense," he decreed. "You are going home with me at once—to-morrow, and you are going to—" He saw the tears on her cheek, and stopped in dismay. "Judy, what is it? Am I distressing you? Aren't you ready to—come home with me?" His voice implied everything, but she only crept closer.

"I have been ready for weeks," she whispered. Then she laughed softly. "Now where's your reserved little cuss?"

"Just where I want her! Then there wasn't anyone else?" he added.

"Oh, he didn't matter," she said,

dreamily. "He only taught me that one has to love some one; I didn't know that before. And then, when I had found it out, I knew of course that I'd have to love you. We belong to the same things, you and I."

"I could have taught you all that," he said, jealously.

She shook her head. "No; I had to get hurt, to learn. Never mind. We are here now. Ah, I'm glad you're a big, live *man!*" she added, impulsively. Presently a smile curled her eyes. "It's cold on the trail to-day,

isn't it?" she said. "We shall have to build a fire when we dismount, Johnny."

"So much the better—we'll broil some bacon," he answered; "and we'll have our coffee hot. I've got my tackle—shall I try for a trout when we strike the creek?"

They laughed together.

"Oh, isn't life good!" she cried. "Johnny, I am starved for that broiled trout!"

"Let's go and get some breakfast," said Johnny, with enthusiasm.



THE TALISMAN

WAKING, in that strange hour before the dawn,
 When Time stands tiptoe, and the step of Death
 Draws, in the silence and the dark, so near
 Its solemn echo on the air we hear,
 When Grief and Loneliness and Loss and Change
 Rise up like specters, menacing and strange,
 And Fear the cowering spirit holds in pawn—
 Waking, I felt my heart grow faint and chill,
 And all my courage fail me, and my breath,
 With heavy presage of Life's certain ill,
 Vague terrors that I knew not how to still,
 And longings for some warmth of comfort near,
 Some human touch amid those shadows drear;
 And then the thought of you upon me came,
 And softly, in the dark, I spoke your name.

The specters paled, the burdened air grew light,
 Peace lifted brooding wings above the night.
 From thought to thought I drifted, quiet, dim,
 Till thoughts grew dreams, and flickered, vaguely bright.
 Then Sleep's cool touch across my eyelids crept,
 And calmly, like a wearied child, I slept,
 Nor woke till birds began their morning hymn,
 The daylight at the window glimmered clear,
 And all the shapes of night had vanished.

Dear,
 In your far chamber, did you wake, and hear?

MARGARET JOHNSON.

TENDER-HEARTED

FIDO sat before the fire
 And, as dogs oft do,
 With his tail upon the hearth-rug,
 Thumped a loud tattoo.

Nell, beside him, crouched and wept
 As if her heart would break;
 Thus I found her, dropping in
 A friendly call to make.

"What is the matter, Nell?" I gasped,
 With apprehension pale.
 She sobbed, "It always makes me cry
 To hear a moving tale."

CAROLINE MISCHKA ROBERTS.



NOT UP-TO-DATE

FATHER—Well, my boy, I don't know of any way to make a living honestly
 except by working for it.

SON—Oh, spruce up, dad, and shake those obsolete ideas of yours.



THESE MODERN CHILDREN

NODD—Are your children making any progress in school?

TODD—Fine! Why, they treat me with more contempt all the time.



THE CITY MISSIONARY—You may not believe it, but I have talked with
 people who knew absolutely nothing about God!

THE SKEPTIC—Slums, or smart set?

CHECKMATE

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF CONSTANTINE DIX

By Barry Pain

MR. STANWICK, the managing director of Messrs. Pawling & Ramsworthy, was a friend of mine, and occasionally helped me to find work for some of those whose reclamation I was attempting. It was therefore with some regret that I stole his valuable collection of stamps in which, as I was aware, he took an immense interest. The circumstances which made this action on my part necessary may be given briefly and will explain exactly how it happened.

Mrs. Gimbrell, the wife of a criminal of low intelligence, had been given work by Pawling & Ramsworthy. I guaranteed the cost of materials entrusted to her. She had a cousin, Mrs. Sanders, a widow who in the rare intervals of her intoxication had seemed to me to show abilities of a rather unusual order. She could draw and design fairly well. Naturally her bad habits prevented her from getting regular work and kept her in a condition of the most miserable poverty. Mrs. Gimbrell had a very proper desire to persuade her cousin to lead a new life, and consulted me on the subject.

"Fust, she drinks because she ain't got nothing else to do; and then she ain't got nothing else to do because she drinks. And that's how it is. Goes on and on like. But she's a woman as might make a good living twenty different ways. So far as cleverness of the head goes I don't know that I wouldn't put her before myself."

"And what," I asked, "do you think we could do?"

"Well, it's this wye. If I were to

come to her with work in my hand and say, 'Now then, Gladys, you take and do this and you'll be well paid for it, and there's plenty more where that came from so long as you keep sober,' then that'd be talking."

I promised her that I would do what I could, and I took some specimens of her drawings to show to my friend, Mr. Stanwick. As it happened, his firm was making at that time rather a specialty of water-color drawings of dresses. Customers could look through the portfolio and find the kind of thing that they wanted. The firm found this a very satisfactory way of dealing with some of their best exclusive ideas. A model in a window or show-room is easily seen, remembered, and copied by a clever dress-maker. The portfolio was shown only to customers with whom the firm was acquainted. He agreed to give Gladys Sanders a trial, and I guaranteed the firm against any loss due to her for a space of one month. During that month she did admirably, showed great resource and produced several novelties out of which the firm made a good profit. They kept her on but they did not renew the guarantee. This may have been carelessness—Stanwick himself said it was an oversight—but I think myself that they had been convinced too readily of the woman's honesty and ability and did not think the guarantee necessary. She was well paid, had no one but herself to support and was now infinitely better off than her cousin, Mrs. Gimbrell, who had befriended her.

There was no excuse whatever for what she did. I am sorry to say that she took sketches of the whole of Messrs. Pawling & Ramsworthy's Spring novelties and sold them to an unscrupulous opposition establishment.

Naturally, Stanwick was furious and sent for me. I offered there and then to make good the money loss, so far as it could be calculated, that the firm had incurred, although I was not legally bound to do anything of the kind. Stanwick would not hear of it. He said he did not want my money. He simply stamped up and down the room, saying that it was the last time he would do anything for my damned East-Enders, and that he would employ respectable people in future. He expressed delight that Mrs. Sanders was in prison and hoped that she would drink herself to death as soon as she came out. I begged him to moderate his language, but it is of little use to argue with an angry man. Out of sheer spite and vindictiveness he stopped giving any further work to Mrs. Gimbrell, though the firm had always found her honest and skilful and were in her case fully protected by my guarantee.

The work was not essential to Mrs. Gimbrell. Alfred had now got a post as night-watchman, and the family could have lived on what he made. But undoubtedly the money that Mrs. Gimbrell earned was very useful to them. They had a large family.

I waited for a week to give Stanwick's temper time to cool down and then I called on him again with reference to Mrs. Gimbrell. He was good enough to say that he was always pleased to see me whenever I looked in to have a chat with him, but on the other point he was as obstinate as ever. I saw that if I pressed the subject it would only end in his losing his temper again. So I left, with a sad heart that such cruelty and obstinacy should be possible in the world, and with the decision to steal Mr. Stanwick's collection of postage stamps. Those who will not lend a hand in the

work of reclamation and try to thrust back a poor woman like Mrs. Gimbrell struggling out of the mire, should be punished in a way that they will feel. I was sure that Stanwick would feel the loss of his collection acutely.

Mr. Stanwick lived in a handsome but rather pretentious house on Wimbledon Common. I had frequently dined there and knew the place well. The stamp-collection was kept in the library in an unlocked bookcase. It had been begun by his father and was now being completed by himself. I have known several cases of hereditary philately. He had told me some years before that he would not take fifteen hundred pounds for the collection, and as he was adding to it from time to time I supposed that it would be worth more now.

The system of bolts, locks and burglar alarms in his house was really ingenious. There was hardly a window in the place which could have been easily and safely opened at night by a burglar with a common pocket-knife. There are very few houses of which one can say as much as that. And Stanwick himself always tested the alarms before going to bed.

I did not propose, therefore, to force my admission into Stanwick's house. I always try the easiest way first. There is a convict at present in Portland who spent five hours and a half on one safe, and then discovered that the thing was not locked at all. I selected a night when Stanwick was giving a big dinner-party. At the moment when everybody was most busy I opened the back door, stepped across a passage to the coal-cellar, entered it, shut the door and sat down. Nothing could have been simpler. My only objection was that the waiting was rather tiresome. I had no light and therefore could not read nor write. To occupy my mind I thought out the address which I was to deliver on the following Sunday.

I heard the last carriage drive away and Stanwick's tired servants go up to bed, but it was not till an hour after

that that Stanwick made his rounds. He is really a singularly thorough and careful man. I heard him locking doors, sliding bolts, and testing electric alarms. At last he went up to bed. Ten minutes later I was walking along the road in the direction of Putney with Stanwick's stamp-collection under my arm. A policeman told me that I had missed the last 'bus, but I was lucky enough to find a belated hansom. I went to sleep, well satisfied with my night's work. Stanwick had no right to punish Mrs. Gimbrell for the faults of Mrs. Sanders. It was an act of abominable injustice that made my blood boil.

This, by the way, is the only time in my life that I have taken anything that I did not want. I have not the faintest interest in stamps, and I did not propose to take the bother or run the risk of disposing of the collection.

Three days later I called on Stanwick at his place of business in Oxford street. He seemed to be in the best of spirits and chaffed me about my usual refusal to have a whiskey-and-soda.

"You seem very cheerful, Stanwick," I said. "Anything happened to you?"

"Yes," he said, "something has happened to me. I have had a bit of luck."

"I am very glad to hear it," I said. "Somebody been leaving you money?"

"No; I have had a burglary at my house."

"You don't say so!"

"Fact. Last Wednesday night somebody or other managed to get into the house. How it was done I cannot imagine. The wire of the burglar alarm was cut against one of the library windows, but how the man managed to get in to cut it I can't conceive. The police think he must have been concealed on the premises, but that doesn't seem to me to be likely. Somebody or other would have been certain to have seen him."

It was by the window of the library that I had made my exit after first cutting the wire.

"I see," I said. "So that's your bit of luck? The chap got scared and

left before he had time to take anything?"

"Not a bit of it! That's the queer part of it. I'm in luck because the burglar did take something; he took my collection of stamps."

"I confess that I don't see it. I thought you valued that collection particularly."

"So I did, and it's because I did that I have been so lucky. Some time ago I had an impression that the collection ought to be worth close on two thousand pounds, and I had it specially insured for that amount. Well, one lives and learns. I came to go over some of the finest things in it—things that my father had got, and I didn't like the look of a good many of them. I got in one of the best experts in London and he confirmed my opinion. The poor old chap had been taken in. Collectors were not so scientific in his day as they are now. Nearly all his best things, the things that give a real money value to a collection, were forgeries. If that collection was worth a thousand pounds that is every penny it was worth. It was insured for two thousand, and the insurance people will pay up like lambs. Consequently I am one thousand pounds to the good on that burglary. I shall begin collecting again with a better system of arrangement, and thoroughly enjoy it. As I said to the police, if I could find the man who stole that collection I'd shake him by the hand and thank him. It might be my duty to get him six months afterward, but that's another matter."

I said, and indeed I thought, that this was very extraordinary. I went on chatting with him for about a quarter of an hour and, as I expected, the name of the insurance people slipped out. It was a good, solid company. As I got up to go I said: "Now, Stanwick, may I speak one word to you seriously?"

"You may," he said. "But if it is what I think it is, you will be wasting your time."

"That," I said, "I cannot help. I must do what I believe to be my duty."

I want you to reconsider the case of Mrs. Gimbrell. She had nothing to do with that woman, Sanders's, transgressions, and it is not right or fair that she should be punished for them."

"How am I to know that she had nothing to do with them? The women were cousins, and it's my belief that it was a put-up thing between them. You've been taken in, as you always are. I've been taken in, too, but I don't give the same person the chance to take me in twice."

"I assure you, you are wrong. I have made mistakes, but I've made none about Mrs. Gimbrell. The woman is honest now and is doing her best to make her husband honest. You must take her back."

"Sorry I can't oblige you, Dix, but I won't."

"Remember," I said, "that the unjust and tyrannical are often punished, even in this world."

"I don't know about that. According to you, I was unjust and tyrannical in sacking a woman for combining with another one to swindle my firm. According to you, I ought to have been struck dead, or something in that line. As a matter of fact, a few days later I get this burglary, which suits me down to the ground and puts a thousand pounds in my pocket. Keep that kind of thing for your sermons, Dix. I am a business man and it has no effect with me."

I appeared depressed as I left him, and he told me to cheer up. As soon as I was out in the street I did cheer up. I very seldom laugh, but I smiled as I walked back to my house in Bloomsbury. Undoubtedly it might appear to a superficial observer that I had lost the game. On the contrary, I was absolutely certain that I had won it.

The following day I went down to see Mrs. Gimbrell. She was despondent and inclined to grumble. "What's the good of keeping strife?" she asked. "That's the plain question I'd like you to answer me, Mr. Dix. It seems you get the sack just the same one way as the other, and how am I to get took on anywhere else? I feel like chucking it,

and letting Alf try his hand at the old game again. It mayn't have been right, but there was some money in it while it lasted."

"Mrs. Gimbrell," I said, "this rebellious spirit must be checked, natural though it may be. You would not speak like that if you knew what had happened. Yesterday I had a few words with Mr. Stanwick on your behalf, and I promise you that within a very few days he will send for you and give you again the same work that you had before."

Mrs. Gimbrell was voluble in her thanks. I hope that my reader will not think that I had any intention of deceiving the poor woman. I could see through to the end of the game, and the end of the game was to be checkmate for Mr. Stanwick. He is a man who believes in luck, and I felt sure that when the blow came he would recall my words and change his mind about Mrs. Gimbrell.

On my return to my house I did up the Stanwicks' collection of stamps in a neat parcel, and wrote on it in a large, printed hand, "Taken in error from Hedley Mount, Wimbledon Common, residence of Mr. Algernon Stanwick." I put this under another cover, directed in a similar hand to the insurance company, and took the next train with it to Northampton. From Northampton I sent off my parcel and returned to London again.

A few days later I made it my business to meet Mr. Stanwick as he was going out to luncheon. We lunched together, and he did his best to appear cheerful. He is a man who cannot help bragging of his good luck, but, where possible, keeps his misfortunes to himself, especially if they are of a kind to render him ridiculous. During luncheon he said:

"I am going to put a funny question to you. After you left me the other day, did you make any attempt to discover who it was that took my stamp-collection? I know you are in touch with all these blackguards, and they might tell you things that they wouldn't tell everybody."

"They do," I said. "But I made no such attempt. I never do police work. If I ever tried anything of the kind, my influence for good would be lost at once. Why do you ask?"

"I don't know," he said, meditatively. "I had some sort of wild idea in my head, but there can be nothing in it. Let's talk about something else."

Toward the close of luncheon he said: "By the way, you wanted me to take that Mrs. Gimbrell back again. Do you think she's honest?"

"I am sure she is," I said.

"Yes, but you wouldn't bet on it. Money talks. Would you be prepared to renew your guarantee for as long as she worked for me?"

"Certainly I would, and be glad of the chance."

"Well, then," he said, "next time you see her you can send her up, and I'll see what can be done. I suppose you won't give me any peace till I do take her back."

In this guess of my intentions he was perfectly correct. At the moment of recording this incident Mrs. Gimbrell is still working for the firm, and has had employment from them for the last two years.

Naturally, from the higher point of view I regard all this with great satisfaction. At the same time I must confess that it was certainly not business.



THE ONE HIGHWAY

AYE, lover, would you love with zest,
Win, hold, and hold her fast and well?
Believe, believe the best, the best,
Though she have singed her skirts in hell!
Hold not one doubt, house just this thought—
That she is all in all you sought.

JOAQUIN MILLER



A STUDY

FRIEND—I was surprised to see you coming out of one of those cheap lunch-wagons last night.

SCRIVENER—Ye-es. The—er—the fact is—er—that I was in there—er—studying types, you know.

FRIEND—Well, which type of pie do you prefer?



EDITOR—You say the editor of the advice column is sick?
ASSISTANT—Yes, he took a dose of his own medicine.

AT THE WHARF

I HEAR the pulleys creak, the hawsers strain,
 The strident outcries of the stevedores,
 The boatswain's piping, and I dream of shores
 Beyond the long plunge of the mighty main.
 Soon yon leviathan will dare again
 The weltering deep with wealth of precious stores—
 Man and his handicraft. Already pours
 From the dark funnel smoke of darker stain.

The great screws churn the channel. In the wind
 Flags are a-flutter; kerchiefs, hats and hands
 Wave, and up-leaps a little burst of cheers;
 Hope wings before, and hope reigns high behind,
 Save in the stricken heart of one who stands
 Silent alone, and cannot see for tears.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



HIS QUALITY OF THINKING

MUGGINS—I have made it a habit always to think before I speak.
 DUGGANS—I suppose that accounts for your putting your foot in it so often.



A WOODEN IDOL

MRS. SHARP—That little Mrs. Dubchump is a perfect heathen.
 MRS. KEAN—Yes, I've noticed that she worships that graven image of a husband of hers.



THE CONTRARY SEX

BATES—What do you think is the reason so few women obey their husbands?
 HENPECK—I guess it's because when they married they promised to do so.

THE TURNING OF THE WORM

By Ruth Kimball Gardiner

IT was not until Champe Merivale had tried several other things that Mrs. Beauchamp's suggestion led her to open a shop. Champe belonged to permanent Washington on her mother's side—her grandmother had been a bridesmaid to Miss Williams, who married the Russian Minister—and to temporary Washington on her father's side. Senator Merivale had been so great a man that for a full fortnight after his death editors eagerly accepted the most patently apocryphal anecdotes concerning him. Crowned heads sent messages of sympathy to his daughter, and nearly half the Senate gathered to hear his eulogies read. Then his successor was seated, and the world went on without him. At the end of a year, if you had said the name Merivale, the inevitable query would have been, "What Merivale?"

Champe at twenty was left alone in the world, with a position in old Washington which she had inherited from her mother, and a house in F street, west of the War Department, which she had inherited from her father, and not a penny to support either position or house. Old Washington said she owed it to herself to marry, but unimportant as the bridegroom is at a wedding, it is nevertheless impossible to go on with one without him, and old Washington confessed itself nonplussed. The First Secretary of the Arabian Embassy had shown her marked attention, but even old Washington did not expect a miracle, and Champe had no *dot*. Henry Denby, her father's secretary, plucked up courage to raise his eyes to her, but Champe would not

entertain the idea of accepting in her need the man she had snubbed in her days of plenty. Furthermore, she was full of fine sentiments and high courage, which is only another way of saying that she was twenty and did not know the world.

The afterglow of her father's influence obtained for her a place in one of the Government departments. She was "in office," and for five years, daily, from nine till four, she wrote names, more or less correctly, on cards in the Census Office. Then Mrs. Beauchamp, who was a very great lady by instinct, by inheritance and by virtue of her husband's real estate transactions, suddenly awoke to the fact that Western millionaires should not be allowed to foregather with the elect without paying tribute. Champe was installed as social secretary to Mrs. Yarnell, whose husband had struck oil, or gold, or Government contracts, and for three seasons she did her best to persuade the lady to leave off referring to her husband by his surname alone. At the end of that time, Mrs. Yarnell still considered the iron dog on her front lawn an addition to the landscape, and Mrs. Beauchamp thought of trade as a last resort.

"If you'll only make your shop small enough and your prices large enough," Mrs. Beauchamp remarked, "you'll succeed. I sha'n't bow to anybody who doesn't wear your hats, and I won't be patroness for any bazaar where at least two booths are not furnished by you. Mrs. Yarnell shall buy what she calls 'lingerings' from you—I'm going to tell people she said it—and I'll invite the society reporters to

luncheon the day you hang out your sign. I suppose," Mrs. Beauchamp added, as an afterthought, "you haven't heard from Henry Denby lately?"

Champe blushed.

"Yes, I have," she said.

"Somebody told me he was coming back here," Mrs. Beauchamp went on, thoughtfully. "Isn't he going to be a Senator or a Representative, or whatever it is they begin with?"

"He's been elected to Congress," said Champe.

"One really meets congressmen everywhere these days," said Mrs. Beauchamp. "I think I shall ask him to dinner. I used to know his uncle—the one that bought up something or stole a railroad, or whatever it was he did. It's almost respectable for a man with Henry Denby's money to be in Congress. Is Congress in session now?"

"You dear, absurd thing!" Champe laughed. "Of course it isn't. It never is in October, and don't you worry about Henry Denby. He can take care of himself, and so can I."

"I know you can," Mrs. Beauchamp replied, "and I wish you couldn't. In my day it wasn't considered at all commendable in a girl. I don't like it, but if you don't succeed with that shop, it won't be my fault."

Mrs. Beauchamp was quite as good as her word. At first, people smiled at her persistent touting, but when Mrs. Yarnell ventured to remark that Champe's prices were sheer robbery, and Mrs. Beauchamp, addressing her a moment later, pointedly called her Mrs. Sanders, it was immediately understood that Mrs. Beauchamp was in earnest. The way to her favor thenceforth lay through the white-and-gold doors of the "Trinket Box" in Connecticut avenue. People began to display cards of invitation to a "Trinket Box" opening with the same elaborate carelessness with which they would an invitation to the British Embassy. Society reporters diligently advertised the exclusiveness of the establishment, and before the small capital which was

Champe's from the sale of the Merivale house had been seriously impaired, the "Trinket Box" was a financial success.

Champe was overjoyed; Mrs. Beauchamp was delighted, and Henry Denby was frankly disgusted. He had proposed to Champe semi-annually for five years, and now that his uncle's money made it possible for him to afford a hobby, proposing to Champe had become not a habit, but a violent fad. Refusing him had become a habit with Champe. She had never admitted even to herself that she expected to marry him some day, but she was sure that if she ever did marry him it would not be till she had made an incontestable success. Henry Denby should never be able to say that she married him because there was nothing else for her to do. Henry Denby would never have said it, or even have thought it, but nobody could persuade Champe to believe that, and nobody but Mrs. Beauchamp ever tried to persuade her.

It was all in vain that Mrs. Beauchamp asked Champe to dinner. Champe refused to come when there was any chance that Henry Denby might be there. She was not to be caught by any such palpable device. She lived with a maid in four tiny rooms over the shop, and she pointed out that it would be manifestly improper to receive any visitors when she could not afford a chaperon.

Henry Denby never received any delicately engraved intimations that the "Trinket Box" had something new and unique in handkerchiefs and stocks, but he was finally driven to present himself at the shop. Champe received him with businesslike directness.

"Can I show you anything to-day?" she asked, maliciously.

Henry Denby was a man of resources.

"Yes, you can," he answered. "I want to buy a bonnet for my sister."

"You never had a sister," Champe remarked.

"Did I say sister?" the member of Congress inquired. "How stupid of

me! I meant my ward. I've got dozens of wards, and they are all crying for hats. Show me something suitable for a ward."

"How old is she?" asked Champe, politely.

"I don't think that matters at all," Denby replied. "I should never think of asking the question myself, but commercialism has its blunting effect on the sensibilities. She's an average aged ward, and she wears a medium sized hat."

"How would this do?" Champe asked, displaying a dainty flower toque.

"Is it a bouquet?" Denby inquired.

"No, it's a hat. This is the way it goes on," and Champe perched the airy trifle on her red-brown hair.

"I never saw anything so lovely," said the congressman. "Send me half a dozen of it."

"We never duplicate a model," said Champe, sternly. "It's the only one of its kind in existence."

"Well, there are other kinds," said Denby, cheerfully. "How much is it?"

"Forty-five dollars."

"I call it dirt cheap," said Denby, not a whit disturbed. "I suppose it's made on solid bullion wires, and warranted fast colors. Haven't you something really elegant for about nine hundred dollars?"

Champe laid the hat down.

"Miss May," she called to an assistant, "please wait on this gentleman."

And without another word she marched into the work-room.

Henry Denby was not easily to be discouraged. For two months he visited the "Trinket Box" persistently. Champe was equally determined. Come he might, and buy he might, but not once would she wait on him.

Early in Lent he entered the "Trinket Box" determined to have speech with her in spite of herself. No, Miss May would not do. It was absolutely necessary that he consult the head of the establishment. Champe appeared, armed with her most business-like manner.

"I've come about a very serious

matter—" he began. "How long will it take you to get a trousseau ready?"

"What on earth do you mean?" Champe gasped.

"I understood that you furnished trousseaux when required," Denby went on, gravely. "I want to buy one, that's all."

Champe stared, bewildered.

"Is it for your ward?" she asked, feebly.

"No, it isn't," Denby answered. "Your lovely hats are now household words in every family in my district, but the trousseau is not for my ward. It's for the lady I expect to marry on Wednesday of Easter week at St. John's Church. I shall not attempt to conceal from you the fact that at one time I had other plans for myself, but a love of sordid gain in a lady whom I shall always admire—"

"You're trying to be funny," Champe interrupted.

"I was never more serious in my life," Denby assured her. "I have at last become convinced that for years I've been making a fool of myself, and I'm going to stop. I am engaged to Miss Ivy Gaillard, of my native State, and I am sure you will be the first to congratulate me."

Champe's world whirled before her. She had never dreamed that Henry had it in him to revolt.

"I do congratulate you—with all my heart," she stammered.

"Thank you," said Denby. "I felt sure you would. You see now for whom I want the trousseau. It's a delicate matter, but I feel that I may confide in you. Miss Gaillard is an orphan in reduced circumstances, and following the custom which prevails in certain European countries, I am to provide the trousseau."

"I wonder she accepts it," Champe flashed.

"She doesn't know I am doing it," Denby explained. "She believes that her great-aunt is providing it. Her great-aunt is named Jenks, *née* Smithers, and lives in Brooklyn. She will accompany Miss Gaillard to Washington. We shall be married very quietly,

owing to the recent death of Mrs. Smithers's—I should say Mrs. Jenks's—husband. If you will kindly assist me in the matter of the trousseau, I shall be deeply grateful."

"But if you buy the things here," Champe objected, "they won't fit. Have you Miss Gaillard's measurements?"

"It is necessary to have her measurements?" Denby asked, rather blankly.

"Absolutely," Champe insisted. "We don't provide gowns, but the—the other things have to fit, you know."

Denby looked thoughtful.

"I shall have to ask Mrs. Jenks to obtain them for me at once," he said. "How would you go about getting a young lady measured without her knowledge?"

"I'd find out who her tailor is, or her dressmaker," said Champe. "He'd be sure to have them."

"Thank you," said Denby. "I shall attend to it at once, and since I am entirely at sea in the matter of things you don't provide, can I not persuade you to take the commission of attending to the gowns as well?"

"I did it for one bride," Champe said, reflectively. "I dare say I might, but suppose I chose things that wouldn't be becoming to her?"

"Everything is becoming to her," was Denby's reply. "Without possessing your striking air of self-reliance and independence, Miss Gaillard resembles you greatly. She has very much your coloring, and is about your height. Anything you select will be becoming to her."

Denby went away a little later, leaving Champe more disturbed than she had ever been before in all her life. The incredible had happened. She was as astonished as if the Monument had suddenly begun to do a cake-walk. Henry had actually given her up at last. There could be no mistake about that. He was positively going to marry somebody else, a somebody with the impossible name of Ivy; a somebody who looked like her. That was

the crowning ignominy of it. She said bitter things to herself about the fickleness of men, assured herself that she didn't care the least bit what Henry Denby chose to do, and cried herself to sleep to prove it.

Miss Gaillard's measurements, which her betrothed produced a week later, proved to be Champe's exactly, but Miss Gaillard's photograph, which Denby showed proudly, made Champe so angry that she longed to slap him. She was not vain, but to be told that she looked like that simpering, dowdy picture, was too much to endure. She felt sure Henry was throwing himself away, and she was equally sure it served him right. She set her teeth firmly, and resolved to provide a trousseau that should bewilder the country-bred Mrs. Henry. It would be a subtle revenge, and she assured herself that she did not feel at all revengeful. She wished Henry all manner of happiness, and if he was determined to marry a girl who wouldn't know a coffee-coat from a dressing-sack, it was not her fault.

Denby watched the trousseau develop with delight. He never failed to call daily to ask how it was progressing, and he made a few extra visits to ask Champe's advice about a suitable wedding present for his bride. Long before the outfit was completed, Champe became positively difficult. Miss May declared that one couldn't open one's head to her without having it snapped off short. Champe worked feverishly, and felt that she would give ten years of her life to have the thing over and done with.

Denby's wedding was to be very quiet, indeed. There were no cards, and he had asked less than twenty people to witness the ceremony. The Iberian Minister was to be best man. Miss Gaillard had written that she did not wish a bridesmaid, and as she had no available kinsman, Mr. Beauchamp had been persuaded to give the bride away. Beyond a brief, "Well, it serves you both right," Mrs. Beauchamp had refrained from comment.

Champe thought of a thousand rea-

sons for staying away from the wedding, but her thousand-and-first thought determined her to be present, if it was the last thing she did on earth. Henry Denby should not have the pleasure of thinking she cared a rap how many girls he married. He might marry his entire constituency, for all it mattered to her.

Mrs. Beauchamp sent her carriage bright and early on the day of the wedding, and Champe, in a gown and hat that shamed the treasures of the trousseau, stepped into it, with a high color and a slightly set smile. Mrs. Beauchamp was not yet visible when Champe arrived at her house, and the girl had scarcely seated herself in the library when the bell rang violently. Henry Denby came in, frock-coated, a white flower in his coat, but none of the joy of the expectant bridegroom in his face. He sank into a chair without a word.

"What in the world has happened?" Champe cried.

Denby raised his head, and looked at her despairingly.

"I don't know how to say it," he said. "She—she has jilted me!"

"What!" exclaimed Champe, horror-stricken.

"Jilted me!" Denby went on, brokenly. "It's incredible, but it's true. You don't know what this means to me, Champe. Jilted at the very church door—a laughing-stock for all my enemies—a joke for my whole world! It's the end of me. I can never hold up my head again. I won't pretend that my heart is broken. It's more

than that. It's my very life. I didn't love her. A man can't love twice in his life, and I never even tried. I—I can't see my way out of this. It isn't only that my pride is hurt. My whole career is ruined. I might as well die now and be done with it."

Champe took a step forward. Her eyes flashed.

"Nonsense, Henry Denby!" she said. "Be a man! Don't let her get the best of you like this—the hateful little cat! Don't give in!"

Denby merely groaned.

"Get even with her," Champe went on, furiously. "I'll marry you myself, just to spite her."

"When?" Denby shouted, springing to his feet.

"This very minute!" Champe cried. "I'll go right off and do it now, just to show her."

Champe never quite remembered the swift drive to the church, and the walk up the narrow aisle of St. John's. She had a dim fancy that neither the Iberian Minister nor Mr. Beauchamp cast so much as a glance at her. She found herself, still upborne by her indignation, repeating the responses firmly. Then she walked down the aisle, seeing nobody, and stepped into the waiting carriage.

Henry held her hand fast for a few moments, in silence. Then he remarked, casually.

"I may as well confess, Champe Denby, there never was any Miss Gaillard. The whole thing was entirely my own idea."



LIFE

IN youth, when met with golden hours, we cry:

"God! Let us live to gather every rose!"

Grown older, if we chance on joy, we sigh:

"God! Let us die before the vision goes!"

ANNA ALICE CHAPIN.

WITH A BOOK OF VERSES

(A DEDICATION)

LONG since I wrote this book, Most Dear, because
 I loved my little lore of rhetoric's laws,
 Thinking, perchance, a scholared mind to please
 With cautious rhyme and careful similes,
 Singing of love, of love, as blind men sing
 The myriad-tinted, hundred-colored Spring.
 Forgive me—that I wrote before I knew,
 Before Life of her pity brought me you.

Most Dear, at last I know how all profane
 My little lines went shrilling Love's refrain.
 There are no words, no earthly voice or wit
 To sing a thing so high and exquisite.
 With broken glass I sought to make a star;
 Oh, little book, how blasphemous you are!
 Let this forgiveness, this my pardon sue.
 I have been silent—silent since I knew.

Yet if, perchance, in this poor verse you see
 Some line not all unworthy, utterly,
 Who knows but one day at my window-pane
 Your laughter beat a moment like May rain.
 And ere you came yourself, across my door
 Your shadow fell—to these I wrote, no more.
 Dear, take these then—poor shadows of Love's grace,
 From one grown silent, having seen his face.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



HIS CONCERN

HE—I hope, darling, that your father isn't anxious about your future?
 SHE—Oh, no! It's about yours.



DASHAWAY—Was the seashore bracing?
 CLEVERTON—Very. I was embraced by the girls and braced by everybody else.

CHANTRY'S INVENTIONS

By Francis Willing Wharton

THE dining-room in the one hotel at Salisbury by the Sea was full of light and air. It would have been a delightful place to take your breakfast, dinner and tea in, Chantry thought, if it had not been used by the ladies of the house as a man trap. No available man escaped, be he eighteen or eighty. Chantry, suffering from the possession of money, a reputation and the full powers of manhood, had grown to feel that the idea of resting in this sunny little seaside place was a mockery.

He sat at his breakfast of a fine day in August and glowered at the list of excellent food provided by the keeper of the Homestead. He wasn't glowering at the menu in reality, but trying to give an impression to the room at large that if he was interrupted while eating, he would be cross, very cross, and he had every intention of setting aside his natural urbanity and carrying out the threat.

He ordered his fruit, ham and eggs, fish, rolls, coffee and finally cakes, as though they were so many loathsome messes, but, as he finished, he looked up at the nice little neat quadroom who waited on him, and smiled. Every bit of his previous work was undone. Mrs. Wilson, who was sliding and frothing toward him in her airy laces, saw that smile and foamed into a seat opposite him with a sigh of relief; she had previously been impressed by his angry back.

"Dear Mr. Chantry," she began.

To another man Chantry's expression would have been intensely amusing. He said nothing.

"Now, don't look like that," said the

lady, and Chantry obeying the iron laws of the society in which he lived, took off the truthful expression of his feelings from his face and looked polite—but with a string to it; anyone could see the string to it.

The quadroom placed the various beginnings of his breakfast before him.

"Now do begin with that lovely pear," said Mrs. Wilson. "Don't mind me. I only want to talk to you about a little plan of mine."

A sardonic expression settled on Chantry's face, and he cut the pear into a number of unnecessary pieces.

"It's just a beach party," went on his uninvited guest, "only a dozen of us to drive over to Walker's Beach, and I must have you."

"I'll be hanged if you do," thought Chantry, but he only looked at her and tried to think. They were driving him desperate among them, these horrible women! Should he have to leave this charming little place just because they wouldn't let him call his soul his own? Surely there must be some way of circumventing them. But what was it? Suddenly an idea occurred to him. He stared at Mrs. Wilson and gravely ate three pieces of pear while he hastily turned it over. He should have to tell a lie, and he never did it well. However, he must manage and he spoke.

"I'm so sorry," he said, "but I expect some one to come down and—er—join my aunt and myself this afternoon."

Mrs. Wilson gave him a brilliant smile. "How delightful!" she responded. "One of your collaborateurs, I suppose! All the better—bring him too!"

Chantry stared at her blankly; again he had an idea.

"It isn't—isn't a man," he said, slowly, gathering some additional color as he spoke, and his knowledge of women was not at fault.

"Oh," said Mrs. Wilson, sadly, "it isn't a man," and there was a moment's silence in which Chantry welcomed his coffee and eggs almost gaily.

"Not a man," again repeated Mrs. Wilson, thoughtfully, her very light green eyes fixing themselves upon him, "not a man! Why, you deep creature, you!"

He was pouring out his coffee as she spoke, and his hand trembled as he saw complete freedom before him in the meshes of another lie. He felt himself reddening, which was a lie in itself, and not being used to deception he felt guilty and still reddened, and Mrs. Wilson laid her hand on his arm; she was famous in her own family for divining hidden things.

"You bad man," she said, "I believe you are engaged all this time, and keeping us all in the dark."

Chantry never looked up from the egg he was demolishing.

"How exciting!" pursued Mrs. Wilson; "and does no one know?"

Chantry almost choked. "No one," he said, hastily, "not even my aunt, and I beg you will not betray me, Mrs. Wilson, will you?"

He was so big and able-looking that Mrs. Wilson glowed as she thought how delightfully she had him. Chantry's mere size was one of his attractions for her; she reveled in thinking that, fairy-like creature that she was, she managed him better than anyone else in the hotel.

"Of course not," she said. "How lovely it is! I hope she appreciates her important duties, Mr. Chantry, with your great talents and all; but do tell me, is she a slender blonde?" Mrs. Wilson was a slender blonde herself. "She ought to be, to make a contrast with you, you know. Now, do tell me just what she looks like."

Chantry set down his coffee-cup and

looked at her. "She is tall and slight," he began.

Mrs. Wilson nodded, approvingly.

"She has blue eyes," he went on, slowly, "and over them eyebrows like little black wings. Her skin is certainly a contrast to mine, very white, and she has carmine lips that shut with a sort of fierceness." He was looking out of the window as he spoke, with an expression that Mrs. Wilson inwardly dubbed tender; and he now turned back to her, but hardly seemed to bring her within his present range of vision.

"She sounds perfect," said Mrs. Wilson, enthusiastically. "Do go on!"

Chantry suddenly descended from the hill of memory he had climbed, and surveyed his marsh of lies. He felt a reaction.

"I beg your pardon, but I have a most important letter to write." He rose precipitately and strode out of the room, leaving the remains of his breakfast, and Mrs. Wilson floated after him, smiling to herself over the light appetites of lovers.

The afternoon had been divine. Chantry had rowed far out in the bay and then back to the upper beach, and, lying there, had sunk himself in peace and old memories. Not so very old—how long was it since he had seen her? Three years. Ah, he had been so frightfully poor then, he had had no time for anything but his work, and she never understood how little room a man has in his life for pleasure, and then she had gone off to Europe with her mother, and he had never seen her since. Things were different with him now; he had room in his life for something besides study, though he could not imagine a life that was not full of work. He should take a month's rest now and go back to the shop then, though the problem he had set himself was solved. How long it had taken him! Years spent alone, absorbed, fighting measurements and calculations. At first, he had been so very poor and unable to get the extravagant machinery, then he had thought

of that little cog and rivet on quite a different problem, and patented it, and he had become rich, very rich in a month. He had had no time to think of his money, except as it brought him the power to work, until now, and now for a while, his task done, he might rest and think of the other things in life. The sand was warm and yellow; he lay flat on it and wondered if she was out in this soft Summer weather, and if so, where? The hours passed, the sun had dropped out of sight, the moon had risen, and Chantry rowed home.

He mounted the hotel steps in the dusky night, and was startled by finding a hand laid upon his arm.

"I've seen her!" cried Mrs. Wilson.

She was in evening dress covered with little golden spangles. She looked very pretty and triumphant, and Chantry wondered whether she had gone off her head. He had prepared an excuse as to the non-appearance of his fiancée—how she was to come in a day or two; in fact, whenever a beach party threatened. This new move of the enemy confused him.

"Seen her!" he repeated.

"Of course, I was off when she came," whispered Mrs. Wilson, "but I saw her at supper, charming—so perfectly like your description! I'd have known her anywhere! I've met her already, but I didn't dare tell her that I was in the grand secret. Oh, no, I only smiled. Of course, she didn't know what that meant nor why I was so pleased to see her."

Chantry stood in paralyzed silence.

"But now," went on his tormentor, "now I want you to come and let us have a nice talk, we three together; come."

He was shaken into speech.

"But that's impossible," he said; and his usual suavity had departed.

Mrs. Wilson stared. "Is there anything the matter?" she asked; "Miss Shippon is just in here." She made a step toward the parlor.

Chantry could hardly believe his ears. The very name, by some coincidence, the very name! He caught her by the arm.

"I beg you will not go in there now," he said; "I certainly cannot. I have had no supper, the room will be shut—I——"

For the second time that day, Mrs. Wilson used her divining-rod. "Something is really the matter," she said, slowly; "you go out by yourself, not with her; you are not in at supper-time; she was even sitting with the Brights; I thought that was funny. You don't want to go to her now, you—you have quarreled."

Chantry set his teeth. What in the name of all the furies were women created for?

"I must have some supper," he said, doggedly. "You can form any opinion of me you wish, only keep it to yourself, in heaven's name!"

Mrs. Wilson caught his arm.

"Make it up first!" she cried. "You won't be happy till you do, a man as much in love as you are. I'll bring her out here now."

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Chantry, savagely. "You will please leave it alone," and he swung out of the darkness into the brightly lighted hall, and so into the supper-room.

He snatched a hasty meal, trying in a state of horrible mental confusion to think of a dignified exodus from his quandary, and almost welcomed his confederate, as he mentally called her, when he found her hovering ready for him in the hall.

"There you are," he said, with assumed cheer; "you and I must have a talk together." He smiled; it couldn't help being a delightful smile, but his heart was knocking about in his boots.

She had, he thought, an almost witch-like expression of knowingness and power.

"Come up to my sitting-room," she said; "we can talk there in peace, and I must understand."

"You shall," said Chantry, with an outward graciousness that made a barrier between her and some very bad language; and he followed in her train, very nearly on it, at moments.

They mounted the one flight, traversed a long corridor, and stopped at the door.

"Have you matches?" asked Mrs. Wilson, in her perfumed whisper.

Chantry wondered whether the windows would let out some of that potent heliotrope.

"I have." He produced a box.

"I never light the lamp till I come; it makes the room so hot, doesn't it?" said Mrs. Wilson. "Will you go in first?"

He turned the handle and entered; striking a match, he advanced through the darkness.

"The lamp is on the table in front of you," she added, softly, and he heard the door close behind him. It struck him as a proof of what frightful strides to intimacy he and his hostess were making and, seeing the lamp by the glimmer of the match, he raised the shade and lighted it. The little flame walked slowly round the wick, and, as he fitted the chimney, he became aware that, sitting silent on a sofa beside him, was a woman. So he was not to have a tête-à-tête with Mrs. Wilson, after all. It startled him, but he waited till he had quite done with the lamp before he looked at this intruder. He stifled a sound of wonder on his lips, as his eyes met a pair of eyes surmounted by two little black wings. He turned to Mrs. Wilson, but she was not there. The door, when it had closed, had shut her out.

At this moment, the key turned in the lock, and, to Chantry and that silent figure on the sofa, came the sound of a soft, mocking voice.

"I'll be back in half an hour. Make it up!"

Chantry stood quite still, and there was silence.

"I suppose," said Miss Shippon, at last, "that she is quite, quite mad. You used to be sane; can you explain?"

Chantry gave an awkward laugh, and then, coming forward, held out his hand.

"Let us shake hands first," he said, "and then—then I'll confess it isn't all Mrs. Wilson's fault."

They shook hands, and then he walked about the room with his hands in his pockets, and something between a smile and a frown on his face.

Miss Shippon watched him. He hadn't changed much in three years, she thought; he was the same big, burly man with little eyes like an elephant's, a great big mouth with finely cut lips, very white teeth, a harsh, red skin and straight hair. He smiled all about his eyes just as he had done three years before, and it had a charm that made people willing to make much effort to produce that result.

Chantry came to a stop before her.

"I've been an awful fool," he said; "must I tell on myself in this hideous way?"

"I'm afraid you must," she returned, smiling, "unless it is a habit in this hotel to lock women up with strange men."

"Oh, come, I'm not a strange man!" he protested.

"But you might just as well have been," was her retort. "How did she know? I'd never mentioned your name. I couldn't make out her cordiality, but just yielded, fascinated, when she brought me up here for a little talk. How could I know you were the box of matches she went for!"

Chantry folded his arms on his wide chest, and brought his perplexed smile to bear on her. She wondered if in three years many other women had fallen in love with this big, burly man with twinkling eyes.

"She thinks we are engaged," said Chantry, slowly; and there was a moment's silence.

"And yet you say she isn't mad," returned Miss Shippon. Her color was rising.

He stuck his hands in his pockets, and stared at the floor.

"Well, you see," he hesitated, "she has reason to think so."

The girl had grown crimson.

"Reason?" she repeated.

"I told her so."

There passed what seemed to Chantry an hour; he did not dare to look up.

"You told her so?" repeated the low, intense voice of his companion; and Chantry raised his eyes.

"Wait," he said, and slipped down into the little chair beside her. "Let me tell you the whole thing."

She rose, precipitately.

"I'm going," she said; "it's preposterous! This is, I suppose, a practical joke; it is an outrage. I'm going."

She had reached the door, and, having shaken it and proved the completeness of their isolation, she turned and faced him with angry eyes and lips that quivered a little.

Chantry also had risen.

"My dear Lucy," he said, "have you forgotten me so utterly as to believe me capable of putting you in this position voluntarily? Think a minute—you used to know me, we were friends once; why we have been so long apart from our friendship seems hard to understand, but, surely I am not quite forgotten."

They were standing looking at each other.

"No," the girl gave a sigh, "of course you wouldn't—but then why——?"

He took her hand and led her back to her seat. "Sit down, and listen patiently," he said. She did so.

"I came down here to rest," he began.

The girl sat up very straight. "Is it done?" she asked, impulsively.

Chantry raised his eyebrows. "The story, do you mean?"

"No, no, the double wheel," she answered, impatiently.

He stared a little. "Do you remember about the double wheel?"

"Of course; but is it done?" she repeated.

"Pretty nearly, only the patent to get," he said; "however, to return. I came here to rest, to swim and fish, to lie on the sand—and I have been hunted like a dog!" He laid his hand on the arm of her chair. "Like a dog," he repeated.

She smiled.

"No man escapes," he went on, "and they have an idea I'm a scientific swell, don't you know, and they have

never let me know a moment's peace. They have lawn parties and boat parties and hay parties and grass parties and——"

She laughed. "And horse parties and cat parties."

He nodded grimly. "Even so; cat parties with a widow and three fine specimens with long claws! Well, this morning, Mrs. Wilson began about a beach party and I was desperate, and necessity being the mother of invention, I invented. I told her I expected some one this afternoon. She said, 'Oh, one of your delightful collaborators! Bring him too!' The ground again yawned beneath my feet, and I said 'it wasn't a man'!"

Miss Shippon smiled, and Chantry, looking into her eyes, smiled also.

"Not bad, eh?" he added.

"It depends," she said; and he gave a groan.

"It does indeed depend. I was dealing unaware with Sherlock Holmes and Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe all rolled into one. She looked at me so hard that I got red, and what do you suppose she said? 'Oh, Mr. Chantry, you are engaged and keeping us all in the dark;' and, like a fool, I thought it a way out of my troubles and let her think she had hit the nail on the head. Then she wanted to know all about it and, finally, asked if the young lady was 'a slender blonde'! I couldn't stand that, so I took a dive into my memory and——"

"And from under the rubbish brought out my face and described it," she said. She had lost her bright color, but her eyes were shining.

"Exactly," he returned, "from under the rubbish brought out the most vivid and charming memory I possessed."

She bowed with a curl of her lip.

He bowed in return, and went on: "I told her you—I mean my fiancée—had eyebrows like little black wings, blue eyes, a white skin and carmine lips that shut rather fiercely—she knew you at once."

Miss Shippon colored again.

Chantry proceeded: "When I came

in she attacked me at once, we had a sort of tangled conversation, and she gathered, with her usual headlong speed, that we had quarreled, and were not ready to make it up, and so she has brought us together, poor little fool, with the best intentions." He stopped and looked at her. "What am I to tell her when she opens the door?"

Miss Shippon raised her round chin in the air. "The truth," she said.

Chantry hesitated. "That instead of our making it up, I had made it all up myself!" He laughed.

She shrugged her shoulders. "Anything you like, but the truth."

He looked at her. "It won't sound so very simple, will it?" he said. "She will ask why I described you—you see—she won't believe I didn't know you were within five hundred miles."

"And didn't care whether I was within a thousand," supplemented Miss Shippon. "Perhaps not, but she will gradually give in, when she sees we see nothing of each other, never meet, hardly speak, and all that."

She was facing him, her eyes very wide and rather hard, her lips, as he had said, fiercely put together. Her arms and neck showed round and white through her black lawn dress, her silky black hair was coiled in a wide braid just above her brow, and Chantry took it all slowly in.

"I see," he answered; "that will, of course, convince her—when we never meet and hardly speak; one might be said to include the other, but it strengthens the impression to put it so, doesn't it? The impression is quite definite when one has done, and most—remarkably unlike what will happen."

They stared at each other.

He went on. "I remember," he said, "I had forgotten—your pride, your horrid, mean pride. It is there still, it seems. I suppose you would really treat me like that if I didn't have the

courage to meet that devil under those black wings and fight him. We were friends, dear friends three years ago. Have I done anything to forfeit the right to your friendship?"

She lowered her white lids and set her teeth, then spoke: "Oh, no, but friendship starves like other things."

"Oh," said Chantry, "it does, does it?"

She looked at him. "Yes, when it isn't even thrown a bone."

He folded his arms on his chest, and through the dark red of his skin the color rose. There was a long pause, during which their eyes never parted. The girl gave a savage twist to her lip. "You have all the courage needed," she said, "why not have the frankness to say you had forgotten me in your work; it is nothing wrong, only a fact."

"In a sense," responded the man, slowly, "it is true; in a sense only. I have lived alone with the thing ever since, wrestled, fought, bled—and back—"

"Far back," she interjected.

He met her eyes. "Far back I thought of the few good things of life—the sands, the sea—and you."

"When you stopped your work," she returned slowly, "you sought the sands, the sea!"

"And found you!" said Chantry; and they heard the key in the lock.

Chantry pushed back his chair, and they both waited till Mrs. Wilson had floated in beside them.

"It wasn't such a bad idea, after all, was it?" she said, softly, and fixed her clever, iridescent eyes on them.

Chantry got up and looked into them.

"It was an inspiration from heaven," he said.

"I can't ask for a fuller acknowledgment than that," said Mrs. Wilson. "Come down and waltz with me first and with her afterward." Which was just what Chantry did.

EVELYN—Yes, my great-grandmother eloped with my great-grandfather.
CHOLLY—Just fancy! Old people like that!

THE QUEST OF NEAR AND FAR

By Zona Gale

THE air is purged of gold, and in its stead
Is poured a fire of silver on the green;
And now the moon, new-risen from the dead
Of dearer nights than this, finds her demesne
Lonely of stars, as they to greet their queen
Had rushed in argent riot from the blue,
To spill themselves like flowers, or waste unseen
In stealing perfumes that elude and woo—
As now eludes, now woos, the wind the sweet night through.

Down from her turret, when the dusk was new,
The Lady Margot stepped, and, lured by wile
Of faint, near things that croon of what they do
With wandering touch, she thought to walk the while
The hours were printless on the idle dial.
Deep in a garden, lamped with lily bells
Which held the light as did some opal vial,
She took her way near where a fountain wells
And wakes its rainbow ribbons into madrigals.

Half fearfully, she scanned the violet gloom,
Thick-shrouding the great wood beyond the wall;
For shapes are woven by the troubled loom
Of night; and tremulous tapestries oft fall
Across familiar paths, and make them all
Astir with effigies that snarl and grin
And take strange steps along a horrid hall,
Which is by day a lane of leaves within—
As if at night a holy nun should dream of sin.

At length, she reached a little windless glade,
Hushed with the hope of loves that it had known,
And dreamful of the days when lips were laid
On lips that trembled as they found their own.
There, where the moon-swept close was thickest sown
With shadows, was the lady met with one
Who sat with drooping head and made soft moan,
He was a stranger knight, whose armor shone
Bright as the molten golden javelins of the sun.

"What things are griefs?" the Lady Margot sighed,
And moved a little nearer, pityingly.
"The wonder wasteth from my days!" he cried;
"The burden of my blessings wearieeth me!

Lo, I have journeyed from an unroared sea
In the white north to where the suns caress
Warm, sail-sown oceans, murmuring round a key
Odorous with wine and fruit in fragrant dress—
And yet I passion for some little happiness!"

"Aye, now," the lady cried, "most strangely come
Are you, Sir Knight, for I am one who longs,
As never heart has longed before, for some
Strange world, strange tongue tuneful with alien songs,
Mad, bright old cities brooding on their wrongs,
With unfamiliar streets that smile and show
Me many a colonnade and portico
Where some unclaimed and starry hour belongs.
O you, who know all that I long for, bid me go!"

No strange thing seemed her prayer unto the knight,
Who knew her father's little court by name,
And pitied her that all her beauty bright
Must fail and fade with such confined fame.
Swiftly he knelt to her, and in no shame
She gave her hand the while he led her where
Within the close the moon took silvery aim,
And lured a sickle-bed of bloom to bear,
In bloom's wan stead, a birth of stars, pearly as air.

The lady stooped and laid her little hand
Upon a dreaming lily, whose dim cream
And gold, stirred at the fingers' faint demand,
Dreamed that the white touch was their sweetest dream.
The lady rose, and every opiate beam
Made lucent pillage from her unbound hair,
And moths brushed lightly through the arrowy stream
In quest of stars. The lady was so fair
That the dusk swooned with passion and the light with prayer.

"Nay, now, my child," the knight said, courteously,
"Would that your joy lay in your castle home,
In phantom folk that pace your 'broidery,
In haunted parchment of a pictured tome.
But if you are of those whose hearts must roam
Afar afield, to meet the hushed advance
Of spheres and win from the blown spray and foam
What weaker some leave to impotent chance,
Then, by my blade, that blade shall bring deliverance!"

A little door, covert in creeping green,
Gave from the court upon the room where lay
The aged, doting nurse, who wept, I ween,
At all the Lady Margot strove to say.
But, when it had proved vain to weep or pray,
She rose and bade her trembling fingers light
Her taper, and thereby she led the way
Through secret gates, till, soberly bedight,
The three set forth together in the faery night.

Oh, many a league for many a day they went,
And some magician kind, they were aware,
Delivered captive treasures, and spent
His lavish store of beauty everywhere:
Slim, brazen towers that taught the sun to share
Its shining, he revealed; and odorous gloom,
Packing with wonders the receiving air;
Flowered silken sails that set the sea abloom;
Isles webbed with fabrics from the moon's high loom.

Sometimes the lady knelt in a fleet prow
That flung the gaudy bubbles from the blue,
And joyed to hear the lean blade of the bow
Plunging the thundering, sundered breakers through;
Keen swept the foam-born breaths of salt, to do
Sweet violence to her pale cheek; and all
The spirits of her fancy peopled new
The perilous sea's impermanent citadel,
That kindled into spray with the ship's rise and fall.

Sometimes she stepped within a pillared way,
Dim gray with shade and honey-bright with sun,
Where all the costly stuffs for barter lay,
And she might hear how many a drowsing one,
Stretched on a peacock patterned skin, would run
Soft syllable along soft syllable,
Praising the violet and vermilion
Of gems and cloths, right eager-tongued to tell
News, musical with names, to one who loved them well.

Meanwhile, the stranger knight was by her side,
Burning to serve and welcoming command;
And never wish of hers might be denied,
For his swift sword was like a dexterous wand.
And by her side, in all that alien land,
The old nurse journeyed, plaintive and perplexed,
Condemning what she did not understand,
And with all other understanding vexed,
Palsied, and muttering charms for what might 'tide them next.

Then it befell that, as they fared, the knight
Forgot his weariness, and many a morn
He faced with joy the lottery of light,
And walked no more apart in mood forlorn.
And now, her tremulous shyness half outworn,
The Lady Margot oft passed through a town
And saw therein but trinkets to adorn
Her little bodice and her silken gown;
And, when he spoke, she looked up swiftly, and looked down.

Oh, sweet it was to see the two dream on!
She, wistful of the runes that he could teach
Of men and cities, dreamed that in such wan
Delights lay life; and he for her sweet speech,

With all its faëry fancy, would beseech,
 And dreamed that in such fancies lay delight!
 And all the time the heart of each for each
 Was calling with the ancient urge of night
 For night, what time the lotus of the dawn is white.

At length they came to a melodious marge
 Where, with sweet perturbation, the moved sea
 Leapt lovingly about the land in large
 Embrace, and from such soft nativity
 The music mounted in dissolving key
 And wed with wind. There, in a crescent cove
 Sun-lorn and still, the eyes of each leapt free,
 And all the world, in a wild silence, strove
 To bare its spirit in their breathed words of love.

"O Sweet, my Sweet!" the knight quoth, reverently,
 "Lo! now, the marvel: that I wearied sore,
 On such a singing earth as this, to be
 One whom the gods give ever one gift more.
 There is no spot from shore to patient shore
 That is not burdened with its waiting bliss;
 Oh, yet, dear love, how little bliss it bore,
 Wert thou not near to tremble at my kiss.
 At last, we know the truth: the best of life is this!"

Slow dipped the idle sails without the bay,
 Sun-smitten in the drowsy afternoon;
 Unimaged in the ripples' purple play,
 White reefs of cloud on airy shores were strewn.
 Then fairly the shadows fell, and soon,
 When gloaming was poured soft on beach and foam,
 The sea gave up a silver shell—the moon.
 Then tenderly she turned, who longed to roam
 Afar, and whispered: "Love, would that our way lay home!"

Near by, upon a rainbow drift of weeds,
 The old nurse mumbled at her prayers and charms,
 And now her shaking fingers felt her beads,
 And now with incantation her old arms
 Were raised to shadowy powers. Oh, grim alarms
 Beset the gaping one when love appears!
 And never lover's glance or kiss half warms
 The world, but that some dotard nods and leers,
 And all the charnel souls are tip-toe with their fears.

Now, silently, across the glimmering sands
 Slow paced the lady and the stranger knight,
 And there were clinging lips and clinging hands,
 And all the uses of the hour were bright;
 But, when they came to where the moon was white
 Upon the wet weeds, there the old dame lay
 Stark on the sea-moss, and the labyrinth light
 Received her soul that knew it not. There may
 Be heaven for such as mock at love, but none can say.

Upon the sands the lady knelt and wept;
 Her lover kissed away her piteous tears.
 "Nay, tender soul," he said, "we have but kept
 The truce of nature with the yester-years.
 Now are the old things passed away, and fears
 For the new day are vain. Therefore, arise!
 Love vanquishes the past itself; love hears
 The siren cities chant of home; love's eyes
 Have lit a sullen world for me to paradise."

Into the silver dark the lovers went,
 Over the silver sea to golden isles,
 Piping their songs of heavenly wonderment,
 And fabling the unhaunted age with smiles.
 And ever, with the swift melodious miles,
 A sterner harmony breathed through their bliss:
 "The old shall be outworn; that which reviles
 The gods shall perish by their ministries.
 But we will walk with truth: the best of life is this."



A SUMMER RESORT

A SUMMER resort is a place where dressmakers display their goods. The proper ingredients of a Summer resort are a blond beach, a delicate, rheumatic hotel, about one thousand victims and plenty of hot air. Summer resorts were originally invented for giving people a rest. Now their principal purpose is to make everybody tired.

In all well-regulated Summer resorts, the food is prepared in a blacksmith's forge located in the rear of the hotel, and served to the guests in porcelain capsules three times a day, whether they want it or not.

The officials of the Summer resort consist of the proprietor, or head bunco-steerer; the clerk, or assistant bunco-steerer; the head-waiter, or chief robber, and the common waiter, or ordinary highwayman.

The proprietor has the best room in the house, which commands a fine view of the ocean and the baggage of the guests. He notes the new and strong arrivals, and mourns over those who are too weak to remain any longer. He shakes hands with all the millionaires and gives the haughty glance to the dry-goods clerk unaccompanied by a chaperon.

The nearest approach that any Summer resort comes to diamond-backed terrapin in the kitchen is a diamond-fronted clerk in the office.

It is the clerk's duty to read and sort all the guests' mail, carefully putting the cash received into the surplus. Coming as he always does from one of the oldest families of Harlem or East St. Louis, he is naturally superior to all the guests, and conceals it with difficulty. His manners are usually a cross between a custom-house officer and a Weber & Fields star, and he always hands you the pen with the third finger of the right hand upon which rests a superb Koh-i-nur that has had yellow fever.

The head-waiter sweeps the air for you as you enter the dining-room, and takes what you have left. If you are poor and of humble descent, wear ready-

made clothes and a look of anxiety, he seats you between an undertaker and a grandmother in the mourner's row. If you look like a horse owner, or a cotton king, he plunges you into the bevy of heiresses who sit at the star table. Then the ordinary waiter places around you a variety of dishes, faintly discernible with the naked eye on a clear day, which remind you so much of real food that you begin to feel hungry.

The principal products raised by Summer resorts are money and flies. Quite a wide gulf separates the two, however, as your money is leaving you all the time, but the flies never leave you at all.

In the beginning of the season a regiment of flies is stationed in each room, with instructions to give no quarter.

Some Summer resorts, having found that the flies will sometimes desert the rooms, put in screens, so that they cannot get away.

The early-morning fly at the Summer resort, who finds insufficient nourishment in the body of his emaciated victim, will often become desperate by hunger and swallow all the towels in the room.

Children exist in great numbers in Summer resorts, for some unknown reason these places being supposed to be good for the final recovery from measles, mumps, scarlet fever and other popular diseases. They romp in the corridors while you take your afternoon nap, and thoughtfully wake you up early enough in the morning to take the business man's train for town when you have foolishly planned to pound your adamantine mattress for another hour.

The only things that are not allowed at a Summer resort are dogs. But it isn't definitely known whether this is a wise provision of Providence or the S. P. C. A.

TOM MASSON.



THE EXPLANATION

"WAR may have its horrors," said Suburbs, reflectively, in reply to my remark, "but at least the warriors' wives don't make them slop whitewash over everything."

"Is whitewash darkening your life?" I asked.

"Did you ever get a speck of lime in your eye, and, while prancing around in your blind agony, sit down in the bucket of whitewash, and upon at last recovering your sight discover your pastor watching and listening to you?" demanded Suburbs, grimly.

"And yet," he added, in a tone of amazement, "people wonder why men don't go to church."



BEHIND IN THE RENT

HEWITT—His words moved me.

JEWETT—Whose?

HEWITT—My landlord's.

THE LITTLE RED DEVIL

By E. R. Punshon

EVEN the office-boy grinned as he handed in the slip of paper bearing Hugh Rogers's name, and the editor frowned and sighed as he saw it, and was tempted to refuse to see him.

"Oh, well," he said, at last, "show him in—show him in," and then, as the boy went out, he muttered to himself: "After all, we were at school together, and Rogers has more brains than any man I know—if only he could have kept straight."

He leaned back in his chair, and got ready the two half-crowns he supposed it was the object of this visit to borrow, but when Rogers actually entered he hastily exchanged them for a sovereign. Never before had he seen his old school-fellow present such a miserable aspect. His boots were out at the toes, the rim of his hat flapped loosely, he appeared to have no waistcoat at all, and with a keen regret, the editor noticed how wild and wandering was the expression of his eyes.

"Rogers," he said, "you've been at it again—why in thunder, man," he asked, with exasperation, "can't you keep away from it?"

Rogers made no answer, but he sat down on a chair and smiled to himself, and then, drawing a manuscript from his pocket, still sat and smiled, stroking it softly between his yellow, claw-like hands.

"Ned," he said, suddenly, "do you remember lending me five shillings a month ago?"

"Why, yes," answered the editor, for that transaction was the ordinary termination to his interviews with his old friend. "Why?" he asked.

"Because," said Rogers, "that is the reason—" he paused, and once again he stroked the manuscript with a long, caressing gesture of affection—"the reason—the reason," he muttered, vaguely, while the editor began to fear he was still under the influence of some recent carouse, "the reason why I've brought this to you," he concluded, with sudden briskness, "rather than to any other paper in London."

"Oh, I see," said the editor, pleased that Rogers should really appear to have done some work at last. Lately he had completed very little, content to drowse and dream away his time, putting upon paper now and again some striking line, perhaps, some isolated fragment of wonderful description or some haunting dozen words of exquisite melody, but never completing anything that the most accommodating paper or publisher could print. "You let me have it, and I'll give you a guinea on the spot," promised the editor.

"And when," asked Rogers, still hugging his manuscript as though loath to part with it, "will you undertake to publish?"

The editor made an impatient gesture. That was just like Rogers, he thought, always making some impracticable condition whenever one tried to benefit him. Besides, remarkable as Rogers's poetry often was, occasionally it was not quite suitable for publication, and occasionally, too, it would be a mere commonplace jingle. Rogers had no faculty of self-criticism, and his work, always either very good or very bad, ranked equally high in his own estimation. The editor felt

no inclination to bind himself in the matter, but he was perfectly willing to pay over the guinea on the spot—though it would very likely have to come out of his own pocket in the end.

"Well," said Rogers, "will you promise to publish in October?"

"My dear fellow," gasped the editor, taken altogether aback at this audacious demand, "surely you must know October is made up by now?"

"Well, November will do," said Rogers; "but no later."

"Oh, no later, eh?" exclaimed the editor, considerably annoyed; and then, giving way to a feeling of pity again, he remarked: "Now, Rogers, you must know as well as I do how poetry——"

"This isn't poetry," replied Rogers; "this is a story."

"Oh, well, that's worse still," said the editor, decidedly. "I might find room for a short poem—but stories—" He waved his arm impressively in the air. "My dear Rogers," he said, "we are full up with stories for months—for months, I do assure you."

He paused to watch the effect of this announcement, and Rogers laid the manuscript on his desk.

"My price," he said, "is twenty pounds."

The editor repressed a strong inclination to pitch the thing into the wastepaper basket. He put his hand on the bell to have Rogers shown out, then he said: "Oh, come now, that's absurd, you know."

"Well, you just read it, Ned Neale," answered Rogers. Quite suddenly he leaned forward, his hands on the desk, his head thrust forward with bulging eyes that seemed ready to start from their sockets, his heavy and foul breath coming in quick gasps. "You just read it, you just read it."

For a moment, the editor half imagined that the man's mind had given way, that at last his way of life had overthrown his brain. But, as quickly as he had risen, Rogers sank back on his chair, gasping and panting, his hands pressed to his heart.

"You read it," he muttered again. "Five shillings you lent me—but this is the little red devil, you know—you lent me five bob, so I brought it to you to read."

"Oh, of course, I'll read it," said the editor, not without a little inward sigh as he thought of all the work he was neglecting.

He picked the manuscript up and began to read, and the ensuing silence was broken only by the rustle of the leaves as he turned them over. At last he finished, and putting the pages down, peered hard at Rogers. Then he picked it up once more, and read it all over again.

"Well," said Rogers, "what do you think of it?"

"I don't know," said the editor.

"Good Lord, I don't know!"

"Will you publish in November, then?"

"I'll publish in October," said the editor; "I'll have to upset all my arrangements, but I'll publish in October all the same."

"I thought so," said Rogers, gravely, rising from his seat.

"But one moment," said the editor; "don't go. Hang it, man, how did you come to write this? It's quite different from your ordinary work."

"Don't you recognize the style?" asked Rogers. He did not seem at all elated, only tired and a little anxious to be away. "I thought all you people knew my style."

"Oh, style!" said the editor. He waved style away with a gesture. "Of course, I would know it for your work anywhere, what with those dots you are so fond of, and 'piquant' and 'tenebrious,' and all your other pet words. No, it's the idea; where did you get that from?"

"Why," said Rogers, slowly, "I—I got it—that's all."

"Well, it's a rum bit of work," commented the editor; "what's this mean?"

He pointed, as he spoke, to an incoherent spluttering with the pen that ran all around the ample margin it was Rogers's invariable custom to leave on

his work. It bore perhaps an indistinct resemblance to writing, but yet contained no distinguishable letters, while at the same time it seemed to be repeated too frequently, and too exactly in the same form, to be mere idle scribbling. It appeared also two or three times in the body of the manuscript, though without any apparent relation to the context. Leaning over the editor's shoulder, Rogers examined it closely.

"I don't know," he said, in a whisper; "what does it mean?"

"Well; you ought to know that, oughtn't you?" answered the editor, staring.

Rogers stretched out a trembling hand.

"Don't say that," he implored; "don't—it's the little red devil," he said, in a whisper, and thereupon slipped from the room and disappeared, leaving the editor staring blankly after him.

About half an hour afterward it occurred to the editor for the first time that Rogers had gone without either receiving any money or leaving an address. "He'll be back soon," the editor assured himself; but in this he proved mistaken, for the year crept on, and the November number was issued, and the attention the story attracted was almost forgotten before Rogers made his appearance at the office again. The moment his name was sent in, the editor came hurrying out.

"Come in, Rogers," he said, hastily. "I've been expecting you for months."

Rogers drifted noiselessly, aimlessly, as it seemed, into the room, and at last came to a rest in a chair by the fire, above which he spread his thin and shivering hands. If he had looked ill before, he looked dying now; and, if his clothes had seemed rags before, now it was a wonder how they clung on him at all.

"I've brought you another manuscript," he said, suddenly, over his shoulder.

"I'm glad to hear it," replied the editor. "Do you know, Rogers," he

added, slowly, "I almost believe that last thing of yours affected the circulation?"

The editor spoke in tones of awe, for this was a feat he had almost lost faith in the power of any story to perform, but Rogers did not seem at all impressed. He only grunted and went on warming his hands, and then, taking a manuscript from his pocket, he threw it on the table. The editor picked it up, and at once became absorbed in its perusal.

"I owe you twenty pounds for that other story," he said, when he had finished; "I'll give you thirty for this. Shall I give it you in cash? And, by the way, there are a lot of letters for you here—about that last story, I suppose."

"In cash," said Rogers, greedily; "yes, in cash," and with an impatient gesture he threw the whole lot of letters the editor had given him into the fire. "Yes, I'll take it in cash."

The editor wrote a cheque and sent out to get it cashed, and then he observed, still bending over the story, which he thought even more remarkable than the first one: "There's that odd scribble again all up and down the margin; what does it mean, Rogers?" He looked at it attentively, and gradually he seemed to distinguish a far-away resemblance to words, so that he became convinced it represented a sentence of some kind, though the meaning and even the language he was quite unable to make out. "Can't you read it, Rogers?" he asked.

"No!" screamed Rogers, and, looking up with a start, the editor saw him regarding him with such an expression of awful fear as human features have seldom worn. "No!" he screamed again; "I can't, I can't, I can't!" and, so crying, he rushed from the room; and though the editor followed him at once, he was unable to overtake him.

"He must be mad, I think," muttered the editor to himself; "but what made him look so scared? And, by Jove, he has gone without his money again."

This time, however, the editor had

not to wait so long for news of his contributor, for this second story was still in the press when a post-card arrived, addressed from a remote part of the East End, and bearing a request from Rogers that the editor would come to see him without delay. Within half an hour the editor was on his way, and soon arrived at a squalid side street, where the appearance of his hansom was evidently an almost unprecedented event. The untidy woman who answered his knock directed him to the top floor, and added the information that he would find the gentleman pretty bad.

"He is ill, then?" asked the editor.

"Oh, just starving," answered the woman, with quiet acquiescence in the familiar; "he has pawned everything, too, except his little red devil."

"His what?" asked the editor, starting.

"Oh, a figure he has that he says talks to him at night. It's terrible ugly, and Mrs. Briggs offered him a tenner for it to stop her baby screaming so, but he wouldn't part with it."

The editor went on up the stairs and, knocking, entered a bare and draughty room, containing nothing except a heap of straw and rags on which Rogers lay, and a rickety table which stood before an upturned box, and on it—as the editor noticed at once—a roll of manuscript. On the broken mantelpiece was a small and hideously ugly figure shaped in the conventional form of a devil, with hoof, horns and tail, and colored a brilliant red. The moment he entered the room this thing caught his eye, and he noticed with a shiver of repulsion the horrid leer pictured on the small face which was supported on its hollowed palm; the whole attitude being one of brooding and sinister patience. An odd but very strong desire seized the editor to knock it down and see it break to pieces on the floor, but instead he went and stood by the sick man's side.

"Well, Rogers, here I am, you see," he said; "and how are you, old chap?"

"Pretty bad," murmured Rogers; "but there's another story for you,"

and he pointed feebly toward the table.

"I see," said the editor, taking possession of it; "but wait a moment."

He went down-stairs again, and by the offer of liberal payment soon had one messenger flying for a doctor and another for a nurse and food, and another with a telegram to a nursing-home he knew of to arrange for Rogers's admission. Then he went back and told him what he had done, but the sick man's only comment was a fretful demand to know if he had read the story yet.

"Well, I will now," said the editor, to soothe him, and, going over to the window, he stood there and became lost to everything, till he suddenly came to himself, with a loud exclamation, to find the doctor already in the room, bending over Rogers.

"What's the matter?" asked the doctor, turning sharply.

"Oh, nothing," replied the editor, much ashamed of himself; "it was just an optical delusion in this wretched light, I suppose—but for the moment I could have sworn I saw that figure on the mantelpiece move."

"Well, it's ugly enough," agreed the doctor, meditatively. "Your friend is pretty weak, but I don't think he needs anything beyond good food and attention."

"Well, he shall have that," declared the editor, and just then Rogers opened his eyes and beckoned to him.

"Have you read the story?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the editor; "I'll give you fifty for this one, so then I shall owe you a hundred altogether."

Rogers nodded in a satisfied way.

"I would not mind so much," he muttered, "if he wouldn't come and sit on the table."

"Wandering," observed the doctor; and then, to the nurse who appeared, he gave directions what to do until arrangements could be made to move the patient. While they were talking the editor went back to look at the story again, and he now noticed that the incoherent scribbling which had

puzzled him on the two former manuscripts was repeated on this. The marks seemed on the whole to be a little plainer now and had certainly been made more firmly, with less hesitation in the lines, but were still, for all that, quite illegible.

"I wonder what it means?" mused the editor, curiously; "it doesn't seem to have any connection with the story, and yet——"

And, presently, he took an opportunity to ask Rogers what that illegible scribble on his manuscript meant, and with just one low cry of fear the sick man fainted away.

"Now," interposed the doctor, angrily, seeing what had happened, "you have made him faint. Couldn't you see how weak he was, and how unfit to stand worrying questions?"

"But," said the editor, defending himself, "it was quite a trivial remark—nothing of any importance."

"Well, what did he faint for, then?" asked the doctor.

The editor retreated in disgrace, and a day or two later called again to see Rogers, now safely ensconced in the nursing-home.

"He's much better," the nurse, who was showing him up-stairs, assured him; "he only needed rest and care. But he still talks at night to himself. I had to go in last night on purpose to ask him to be quiet;" and then she ushered him into an airy, comfortable room, where Rogers, already appearing much better, lay in bed.

However, the editor did not look at him, but, staring and gaping on the threshold, gazed in blank amazement at the mantelpiece, where stood that little figure of a fiend, which he had seen before, colored a brilliant red.

"Isn't it hideous?" said the nurse, in a whisper; "but Mr. Rogers will have it by him."

"Quite so," said the editor, moistening his dry lips.

Though the figure was undoubtedly the same, he saw with a strange terror that in some mysterious way its position and attitude had become slightly changed. The abhorrent and

disgusting leer on the small face remained as before, but the chin no longer rested on the hollowed hands, for they were now held with bent fingers in front of the body, giving an idea of movement suddenly arrested. Indeed, the whole attitude of the figure seemed now to convey not the idea of secret and brooding patience, but of instant readiness for action. Once again the editor had an impulse to throw it on the floor, that it might break into ten thousand pieces which he could trample into dust, but instead he sat down by Rogers's side.

"Well, how are you now?" he asked; "feeling better?"

"Oh, much better," answered Rogers, loudly, and then added, in a whisper: "I have another manuscript for you."

"Another already?" exclaimed the editor; "but, my dear fellow, you are not fit to do any work yet."

"I finished it last night," continued Rogers, in the same whisper; "in spite of interruptions," he added.

"Interruptions?" repeated the editor; and he remembered how the nurse had spoken of some midnight talk she had overheard. A sense of uneasiness, of a heavy and an evil oppression, weighed him down with vague apprehensions. "Look here," he said, angrily, "you've just got to stop working or I'll speak to the doctor, by Jove!"

"You see," said Rogers, whispering again, "here there is no table near, so that he has to cling to the bed-rails. And that's so awkward."

"What do you mean?" asked the editor, and his glance wandered toward the little red image on the mantelpiece.

"Here's the manuscript," said Rogers, abruptly. "Don't read it now."

"All right," answered the editor, and then he once more caught sight of that odd splutter of incoherent and apparently meaningless scribbling which seemed now to distinguish all Rogers's writing. "What on earth makes you tack that scribble to all

you do?" he asked, crossly. "What does it mean?"

"Do you wish me to die," said Rogers, in a low and terrible voice, "that you ask me that?"

The editor stared, but, seeing the other's agitation, he said nothing. As soon, however, as he returned to his office he read the story; which he found more strange and weirdly fascinating, with its half-hinted glimpses of another world and a more profound philosophy, than even the others had been. Then he devoted himself to trying to decipher the scribbled sentence which ran all over and through this manuscript, as it had through the other three. He even got a magnifying-glass to help him, and at last he convinced himself that it bore no meaning at all, that it was probably just some nervous trick Rogers had got into. Then a new idea struck him, and he called in his office-boy, a rosy-cheeked little lad, who had been with him only a day or two.

"Here," he said, "can you make out what this means?"

"Huh, yes, sir," answered the lad, contemptuously; "that's, 'Take now your razor or a knife, and sever quickly your throat from ear to ear.'"

"It says—what?" cried the editor; but now when he bent above the manuscript again these marks seemed to him to bear that meaning so plainly that he could not understand how he had ever failed to read them. "What does it *mean*, though?" he muttered to himself again.

Late as it was, he took his hat and was soon on his way back to the nursing-home, which he reached close on midnight, and found all lighted up and in a state of much agitation and confusion.

"Oh, have you got my telegram already?" said the resident doctor, meeting him in the hall. "A terrible affair—I assure you such a thing has never happened here before—a ter-

rible, a most terrible affair—and quite unprecedented."

"Indeed?" said the editor, and he did not ask what had happened, for in his clamorous brain echoed unceasingly like thunder the words the office-boy had read to him, "Take now your razor or a knife, and sever quickly your throat from ear to ear;" "Take now your razor or a knife, and sever quickly your throat from ear to ear."

"And there was no motive," complained the doctor, as he led the way up-stairs; "no motive at all—the happiest, most cheerful patient in the house, and improving so rapidly. You know no motive, sir?"

"Motive?" repeated the editor; and then, the doctor opening a door, they entered the room where Rogers lay dead on his bed, his throat, severed by his own hand, gaping from ear to ear.

The grosser signs of the tragedy had been already removed, but the editor went very pale and breathed hard in his throat as though he were strangling, and he pointed to the head of the bed, where, perched on the iron rails, was the little figure of a fiend, colored a brilliant red, on the small face a leer of abhorrent and disgusting content, the chin resting now again on its hollowed palm in an attitude of renewed waiting.

"What's—that?" asked the editor, trembling violently.

"Oh, an ornament the poor fellow seemed fond of," answered the doctor, and then he looked puzzled. "But how did it get there?" he asked, "and how has it got balanced on the rail like that? I don't understand."

"I do," said the editor, and with his hand he struck the figure down so that it fell on the floor and shattered into ten thousand pieces. "I do," said the editor again, and he stamped upon each fragment till there was nothing left but a handful of white powder. "I do," he said, for the third time; "but come away—come away into God's clear air outside."



THE LOVE OF GLENDA WILDERSON

By Ethel Sigsbee Small

THIS is going to be the story of the love of Glenda Wilderson.

I tell you that in the title, but I've got to begin some way. I've always wanted to write a story, for literature has ever been what I most excel in. I never get less than "Excellent" in English, and whenever they have visitors I am always called on to read my composition last so the visitor will go away with a good impression. From this you will see that I know whereof I speak. This story isn't about me, but I thought I might as well tell you that much.

Glenda, at the time my story opens, was fifteen. She is fifteen still, for all the events which I am going to set forth happened but four short months ago. She was, and is, my most devoted friend. I can't keep on saying was and is all through the story, so when I say "Glenda was a perfect beauty," you'll remember it is *is*, too. I get to that now.

Glenda was a perfect beauty. My parents often tell me that I exaggerate in describing things, but I am not exaggerating when I say this. She simply was. My brother, who hates girls, told one of his friends, and he told his sister and she is a friend of mine—not a devoted friend, but I see her at church and we have called—that Glenda Wilderson was a "cute-looking thing." If you knew Hal you would realize what praise this is. The rest of mankind—of course all of them haven't seen Glenda, but that isn't exaggeration; it's what you call a metaphor, or something of that sort; I've read it in books, anyway—the rest of mankind agree with me that she is a perfect

beauty. (Repetition of a word or phrase often lends strength to a paragraph; I suppose of course you know that. That's why I repeated "perfect beauty." I could have thought up lots of other expressions if I had wanted to; "wonderfully beautiful," "absolutely lovely," "exquisitely pretty," are some of them.)

In the first place, Glenda's hair curls—not corkscrews; goodness, no! but big, loose, shining waves. When she takes it down it waves to the end, where it breaks into ripples as the waves do when they reach the beach. (My parents think I have no real talent for writing. I don't want to seem egotistical, but I think that description of Glenda's hair about settles the matter.)

My hair is straight. Almost a tragedy is contained in those four words. This story is not about me, but I can't help wanting to tell of my greatest trial here. My mother neglected to brush my head the wrong way when I was a baby. One would think a mother owed her child that much; but I was the fourth baby, and I suppose she got tired. All the others curl. It would take a better pen than mine (I intended to say that in describing Glenda's hair, but I forgot it) to tell of what I have suffered in consequence. At night I go to bed with knobs around my head. They are most uncomfortable, but that is nothing compared to the awful thought that of course I can never get married. No man could possibly remain in love with the fright I look. I will merely touch on the horrors of a rainy day, and what humiliation I undergo at the

seashore. Even a damp breeze takes the curl out. There are some things too near the heart to talk about.

Besides her beautiful hair, Glenda has perfectly gorgeous eyes. They are blue. So are mine, for that matter, but what a difference! Glenda's are so wide and deep and clear, and the black in them spreads almost over the blue. Then the lids are thick and white and her lashes fine and long, and they make shadows. That is something mine cannot be made to do. I've snipped them, at the new moon, and used quarts of vaseline—well, half a bottle, anyway. (My parents will probably see this story.)

Glenda has a lovely complexion and a darling figure. She wears a girdle. Any beauty-doctor in the Sunday papers will tell you that this takes a perfect form. My mother does not allow me to wear any sort of corset, so of course I have the figure of a pig. Still, I would not have you think me utterly without charm. (This story is not about me, but as I am always wild, when I read a story, to know what the author looks like, I suppose you are, too; so I will tell you.) I have blue eyes—the kind you see everywhere; long, thick hair, quite a pretty shade of brown; an awful figure, as I told you; big mouth; excellent teeth; snub of a nose; white, plump neck; fair arms, and *lovely* legs. (I hope there are no men reading this story.)

Besides being beautiful, Glenda is very talented. There isn't a girl, in school or out of it, who can kick like Glenda. Her record is six-feet three—that is a whole foot over her head. There isn't a chandelier in our house that hasn't got the little knob on the bottom of it twisted, and the one in my room hasn't a globe to its name. Most of the girls can kick only six inches above their heads, and the best ones only eight, so you see Glenda is really remarkable. She could go on the stage to-morrow, only her mother won't let her. Not one of the girls' mothers will, except Cissie Ronald's, and hers says Cissie can go when she is

twenty-three, if she still wants to. It is very hard on Cissie to have to wait all that time, but it is better than a flat refusal and being laughed at and called the "Queen of Comic Tragedy," which is the cross I have to endure. Glenda's real forte is dying and emotional scenes, but she is splendid at singing French songs with a dance at the end, too—Glenda is so versatile. She has the French accent down to perfection, though she has an awful time with French grammar at school. Besides all this, Glenda can copy Gibson heads so you can't tell them from real ones, and cry real tears by simply holding her breath.

Now, wouldn't you think that a girl like this—beautiful, accomplished, talented—would have plenty of boys ready to go down and die for her? And yet it was to Cissie that Watt Tilford brought those violets last Spring; it was Edna whom George asked to go to the *matinée*; and it wasn't Glenda who Pierce Dering said was the dearest girl in school. (I would rather not say who it was. My parents have such a distorted sense of humor.) No, Glenda was not popular with the masculine sex, and I'll tell you why. She had a perfect passion for saying things she shouldn't—the wrong thing at the wrong time. Every boy in school fell in love with her as soon as he saw her, she was such an exquisite creature, but she always managed to say something after he had known her a day or so—a week was the longest she ever went—and then it was all over. But the strangest thing was that Glenda did not seem to mind. It used to make me so frantic to see the way she let her opportunities slip, for of course every girl likes to be popular, and at last I even went so far as to broach this very delicate subject to her.

"Susan," she said. (There! it's out. I didn't know how to get it in so as not to shock the reader. Susan is my name. My parents have much to answer for in not brushing me the wrong way, but calling me Susan was a crime. I can do my hair in knots,

though I suffer, but I cannot get over being Susan. I tried to make them call me Suzanne once, but they would explode so every time they said it that I was really relieved when they went back to Susan again. Glenda does call me Suzanne when she remembers, but she doesn't very often. What wouldn't I give for *her* name! Isn't it just too like a heroine in a play or a novel for anything?) To resume:

"Susan," said Glenda, "I'm afraid I don't care much whether Billy Carington doesn't like me any more or not. In fact, the only thing in this life I *do* care about is my art—that is the very heart of me." And she looked so beautiful when she said it! She was darning her father's socks at the time; her mother made her darn a pair every Saturday, and she clasped them to her breast as she spoke. I was thrilled.

"And don't you care whether you ever marry or not, Glenda?" I asked her, awed by her eloquence and beauty.

"I am wedded already," said Glenda, "to my art."

Of course I had heard that before, but it is the way Glenda says things that thrills you. And Glenda really meant it. Of all the girls—except, perhaps, Cissie—she was the most in earnest. I have seen her spend a whole recess practising a step she had seen in a musical comedy the Saturday before; and when Winifred Huntingdon came here in "Souls," in which she faints down a whole flight of steps in the second act, you remember, Glenda had great black-and-blue spots on her for weeks, and she limped so it was pitiful to see her. But her mother wouldn't let her stop school. I don't see how parents can be so hard-hearted. Glenda says she could never be to a child of hers, and I couldn't, either. Glenda has arranged just how she is going to do with her children. If they want to go on the stage—and of course they will if they take after their mother—she is going to make everything easy for them. Until they are thirteen they must be

content to act at home in plays she will write for them, but just as soon as they are thirteen they may go. She says she would like nothing better than to see them all stars and happy. I don't see why all parents can't take this view of it.

Glenda and I had the same ideas on every subject except one. I loved books and Glenda didn't. (I guess you are beginning to wonder when the story of Glenda's love comes in. I'm always crazy for the love part to come myself, so I *know* just how you feel. I get to that just after I finish talking about books. I'm hurrying as fast as I can.) As I said before, I loved books and Glenda didn't. Some nights I have read until two in the morning with a skirt pinned up over the transom. It used to grieve me that Glenda would not read more, but she said she didn't have time and that anyway the stuff I read was awful trash. That was the cruellest thing Glenda ever said to me. I answered very calmly and quietly. I said "Lovely Evelyn's Error; or, Flaming Hearts," was not trash, and neither was "The Bride of a Day," but if she thought so she could take them home any time and read them. Glenda said she didn't think she cared to. Glenda's literary tendencies were really sadly deficient. I did finally persuade her to take "Lovely Evelyn" home with her, but she never read it though I let it stay on her book-shelf, hoping the day would come when she would.

"Lovely Evelyn" is a *lovely* story. Perhaps you have read it. It is about this beautiful girl, Evelyn Arsdale, who has more lovers than she could count on her pretty, white fingers did she have twice as many—that's the way the book puts it. She flirts and coquets with them all until she finally discovers she really loves her guardian, whom she has known since a child. He is rather old, but he is so fascinating you don't mind it. In one place it speaks of Sir Anthony—that's the guardian—touching "the glittering, billowing tresses hanging like shredded gold down her back which

reached to her knees." I think I have quoted it correctly. The whole book is full of things like that. If you haven't read it, I advise you to.

On the seventh of May, Glenda's mother, quite unexpectedly, let her stop school. Glenda had been begging to stop for months, and when her mother actually let her Glenda nearly fainted—in earnest. Glenda had complained of weak eyes, headaches and dizziness caused by leaning over a desk; but her mother wouldn't hear of it, and then one day, when Glenda had given up trying, she decided Glenda was growing too fast and let her stop! Glenda had never thought of that. Her mother said she could study with her at home and keep up her French with Aunt Margaret. Glenda was perfectly delighted because, of course, that means not studying at all—parents always say that just to make you think you're not getting off too easy. I told my parents I felt I was growing entirely too fast, but they said they didn't think so. They never do think what I think.

When Glenda stopped school her dresses began creeping down and her hair creeping up. She let out the tucks one by one and pinned her braid a little higher every morning, so her mother wouldn't notice. When she had been out of school two months she looked like a full-fledged young lady. And she was *simply beautiful*. The house was always full of men coming to see Glenda's sister, and of course when they saw how pretty Glenda was they would open their eyes and begin to talk to her. When she said tactless things they didn't look sulky like the boys at school, but laughed and looked at each other as if they thought she was perfectly delightful. Glenda's sister, Bernice (they all have the most beautiful names; even the cook's name is Muriel), was perfectly beautiful, but she wasn't nearly as beautiful as Glenda. I guess her sister must have realized this, because she tried to keep Glenda from coming in the parlor.

"Mama," she would say to her

mother, "I think Glenda ought to be made to go to bed at half-past eight. She's growing so fast, and her complexion is dreadfully sallow. What the child needs is rest."

Did you ever hear anything so perfectly hypocritical? But Glenda got in the parlor just the same; her mother said she "saw no harm in it." She used to *make* Glenda go in sometimes when only one man was there.

Ah! if Glenda could only have looked through the telescope of the present into the firmament of the future she would have begged to go to bed at half-past eight; if she could have torn away the veil that hangs between Now and Someday, wild horses could not have dragged her across that parlor door! Sooner would she have leaped from her window to possible, nay, probable, death; sooner would she with her own delicate hands have stopped the breath in her white throat; sooner would she have—

It has taken me thirteen minutes to write this much of that paragraph, and I think that is plenty long enough. You must have the idea by this time, so there isn't any use of finishing. Besides, I don't seem to be able to think of another thing she sooner would have done. The idea was to get you curious, and if you aren't curious by this time you probably never will be.

Of course, I didn't see very much of Glenda now, but I would go over to her house every afternoon after school, and we were together Fridays in the evening. Saturday I had to study Monday's lessons, and Sundays aren't ever good for much except hymns and sleeping.

On the Friday on which my story opens—it opened a good while ago, but I mean the exciting part; you're not any gladder I've got to it than I am—Glenda told me to come over *early*. She sent a note by her little brother, Alonso, and "early" was underscored three times. She said she had found some old things in the garret that would make splendid costumes,

and we could dress up and work some. (We always spoke of acting as work, it sounded so professional; but it wasn't work a bit for us—it was fun, pure, sheer fun.)

Well, I hurried through dinner, and Kitty took me over. I told her to call for me at a quarter of ten—mother had told her, too, but I don't like to be treated like a child—and ran up to Glenda's room. I stopped outside, for the door was locked, and then said:

"What ho! within!" That's a quotation. Her answer should have been:

"Enter, but leave all sin behind, for the ground on which you tread is holy." But she just called out in a faint, rather tired voice, almost crossly: "Oh, is that you, Susan? Come in."

I was very much amazed, but a still greater surprise was in store for me. I had of course expected to see Glenda surrounded by costumes, with her Aunt Margaret's rhinestone pin in her hair and her sister's French-heel slippers on her feet. What a sight met my eyes! Glenda had on a plain, piqué shirtwaist and some old, pink-worsted bedroom shoes. She was sitting in front of her dressing-table with her head on her hand, and she did not even jump up as I entered. She simply raised her head and said "Hello!" in that same faint, tired voice. I was positively horrified.

"What on earth is the matter?" I gasped. I was afraid her mother had said she couldn't go to the theatre next week, or that she had been eating too much of her sister's candy. She does that sometimes.

"Oh, nothing, nothing!" said Glenda, with a tired sigh, and she put her hand to her heart. I was sure it was the candy then, but something in her face kept the question back. I didn't say a single word and I'm so glad I didn't now, for it would have hurt her awfully to have me think such an ordinary thing was the matter with her when such an important thing was. Suddenly Glenda leaned

forward and fixed her eyes on me. They were the blackest, brilliantest eyes you ever saw; no one would have guessed they were blue that night. Then she spoke.

"Susan," she said, "were you ever in love?" Her voice thrilled you.

Now, I had never spoken much about love to Glenda because she had always been all for "art" and "work" and "a mission in life," but when I saw she really wanted to know, I told her. In a quiet voice I spoke of Charley Edsmond; old Mr. Grownd's son; Frank Simons; Martin Baker, and the man that married Ellie Fallow's sister. I didn't mention any others because I thought those would do. Glenda listened to every word and never once took her eyes off me. Then she said: "And was your love returned?"

I didn't know quite what to say then. You see, it nearly always happens that the ones I love are in love with some one else, and the ones who love me—I would not have you think me unlovable—I don't care a snap about. I felt like fibbing, but I never have, to Glenda, so I told her the truth. Then she turned away and sighed. I never heard anyone sigh like that except on the stage. Glenda was born to be an actress.

"I love and am loved!" she breathed.

Then, do you know, the strangest thing happened. All at once I felt so out of place and queer—just as if I didn't belong there. I felt as if I wanted to go home. I would have, but I didn't know how. It was so perfectly silly because I had known Glenda ever since we were children. Then suddenly Glenda began to cry and I forgot all about myself. I patted her arm and comforted her the way I always did when there was an examination in the afternoon session, or her head ached, or her father had said she didn't have any histrionic talent and he was tired of the whole ridiculous business. When Glenda stopped I was myself again, and awfully curious to know about everything.

"But if you both love each other, why aren't you happy?" I asked her.

Glenda looked rather queer herself then. She began wiping her eyes and pushing back her hair.

"He has not told me yet," she said, tremulously. "He is afraid. He knows what tyrants mama and papa are and how anxious Bernice is that I should be unhappy." It sounded awful, her calling her parents "tyrants" like that, but they say all is fair in love and war, and she had never done it before.

"Who—who is he?" I asked, trying not to seem curious; but I was so simply dying to know, that I guess my voice trembled.

Glenda looked down until her beautiful long lashes touched her cheeks. "Colonel Condenton," she murmured.

When Glenda said that my head simply swam, and I jumped.

"Colonel Condenton!" I kept saying, and Glenda nodded each time.

"A god among men," breathed Glenda. It sounded very familiar, but I could not place it, and I was too excited to try.

"Isn't— isn't he thirty-five?" I said.

"Love, himself, comes to none until they have passed the thirty-fifth milestone," said Glenda.

"But you are only fifteen!" I was dreadfully puzzled.

"I meant to men," said Glenda, coldly.

Well, I was awfully impressed. I couldn't help but be. Here was something I had never experienced. The people I had loved had been boys, or, at the oldest, young men; Ellie Fallow's husband had been twenty-three. And here were Glenda and Colonel Condenton! He was thirty-five, his hair was partly gray, he had some lines on his face, and a *mustache*! I was speechless.

But Glenda seemed to be waking up. She pushed a box of her sister's candy at me and began to talk. I noticed she did not eat any herself, and that impressed me still more, for I knew she must be dreadfully in earnest.

Glenda began by saying that Colo-

nel Condenton, as I knew, was an old friend of the family. Glenda had known him ever since a child, but until yesterday it was as if a band had been stretched across her eyes. Last night he came to call, and she was sitting at the piano when he entered. The lights were dim and the scent of roses wafted faintly through the apartment. (I am telling you just what Glenda said.) Glenda's hands were running lightly over the keys. Her fingers began to weave softly the melody of Grieg's "Ich Liebe Dich." She had got to the part that goes "Thou art my love, my only love"— I will translate because you may not have studied German—when she looked up and saw Colonel Condenton. Then she knew she had never loved anyone but him. All the folly of her past life rushed, wave-like, over her. She sat trembling. He came and stood by the piano and turned the leaves and hummed through the song until Bernice came down. Then Glenda slipped away, and his eyes followed her hungrily. Glenda went to bed and lay awake for hours thinking, thinking, thinking.

If I hadn't looked hard at a hole in one of Glenda's old bedroom shoes all the while she was talking I would have thought I was at the theatre. It all seemed so romantic. And yet it all sounded so familiar, too. When Glenda stopped to breathe I felt I could almost have gone on with it myself.

Glenda said she feared there was to be nothing in store for her but a great unhappiness, for while she was sure she was loved even as she loved, he would never dare tell her so. I thought she was going to call her mother and father tyrants again, and I felt very uncomfortable; but just at that moment Kitty knocked at the door. Glenda sighed as she kissed me good-bye, and when I looked back I saw she had her arms on the dressing-table and her head in her hands again. I had to pinch myself going home to make sure I hadn't been dreaming. I pinched so hard once I

said "Ouch!" and Kitty asked me if anything was the matter. Well, that's all of that part. I told you it was going to be exciting.

Of course I was too excited to do much studying that week. I spent the study hours in thinking about Glenda and the recitation periods in wishing I hadn't. I knew that Glenda would not like to have her secret bruited abroad, though she had not made me promise, so I did not bruit it to a soul, except Cissie, who is so sympathetic and artistic. I knew Glenda wouldn't mind her, and three or four of the other girls. They were all as impressed as I had been, and I rather think I told it as well as Glenda. Sometimes I would add a few lilies to the roses when I got to that part about the scent being wafted; it sounded, somehow, as if they ought to be there. Right after school I would have to run over to Glenda's to hear the latest news, and the next day I would have to tell the girls about it, so you can easily see I had quite enough to do without studying.

Glenda was always sad. She talked a lot about her great unhappiness, and how Fate had crowned her head with grief, but it seemed to me she was having a pretty good time. She would go into the parlor every night when Colonel Condenton was there, and he came three times a week; then twice he brought her a box of candy, and once he took her to the theatre. After that I don't see how Glenda could be said to lead a strictly wretched life. I was wild to know what happened at the theatre, for with the family out of the way it did seem as if something ought to happen, and though you aren't expected to repeat such things, still Glenda and I had always been such devoted friends. But Glenda was surprised I would think Colonel Condenton capable of such vulgarity as proposing in the presence of a multitude. She said he had sat there with his arms folded, scarcely saying a word, looking out over the heads of the people but not seeing any of them. I asked her why

he didn't, and she said it was because he was thinking of her. Glenda is awfully bright that way! Now, I would have thought he was tired, or didn't like the play, or maybe had had too much dinner. But you can depend on Glenda to know the truth.

Besides the theatre and candy, Colonel Condenton brought Glenda a big bunch of violets one night. He had come up expecting to take Bernice to the theatre, and Bernice had gone out with another man. He had the flowers in his hand, and as Glenda came into the room he held them out to her.

"Little girl, do you like posies?" he said.

I shouldn't have cared to be called a little girl myself, but Glenda said, uttered as he uttered it, it meant volumes. He only stayed a few moments and he seemed very sad all the time. His love was so great he couldn't have kept it secret if he had stayed, and speaking could only have brought unhappiness. That's what Glenda said when I asked her why he hadn't spent the evening. It really did seem as if the colonel must be Glenda's affinity, in spite of his mustache, because she always knew what everything he said meant, and what he thought and why he said things.

Well, I suppose by this time you are wondering what Glenda had to be sad about, and, to tell the truth, I was wondering, too, about this time, and I asked her. Then she told me. The whole trouble was Bernice. *She would insist on coming in the parlor.* Of course the colonel asked for her—and all the others—as a mask to his real feelings and to throw the family off the trail—but Bernice ought to have known better. (If this were a funny story, instead of such a serious one, I would say that Bernice was thrown so far off the trail there didn't seem to be any hope of her finding her way back.) Evening after evening, there she would sit talking and laughing and telling little jokes until Glenda and her poor lover were ready to expire. And her conversation was always so frivolous. She would tell about the cotillion she had

danced the other night and how well Mr. So-and-So had danced it, and about the Welsh rabbit for Monday night, and who would be there and what she was going to wear. Glenda said sometimes the expression of Colonel Condenton's face would almost frighten her, it was so wild. She was so afraid he would not be able to stand it much longer and some night burst out with, "Begone, woman, and leave me to my love!" or something like that. Glenda said once or twice she had come very near saying it herself.

When Glenda told me all this my heart ached for her. I took a solemn vow that I would help her. You see, I wasn't having any particular love-affair myself at this time (I had thought a little of the algebra teacher, but he kept me in twice, so I changed my mind), so I had plenty of time to devote to Glenda's trouble. The girls—especially Cissie—helped me with my lessons so my mind need not be distracted with that kind of matter. (You would probably have written "those kind," but I know all about those kind of things.)

I thought of lots of plans, but none of them seemed any good, and then finally I found one. It was a very desperate plan. Glenda and I had to stop to squeeze each other's hands when I told her. There were a good many fibs in it, too, but Glenda said they would all be told in the cause of love. This was the plan. It was beautiful in its simplicity.

Bernice had a friend named Helen who lived on the next street. Bernice and she used to be as devoted friends as Glenda and I, but Bernice had had so many beaus and parties and cotillions lately they hadn't been quite so chummy. You see, Helen was rather quiet. Well, Glenda and I were to go to Helen's house and tell her Bernice was coming over that evening. And we were to choose one of the colonel's nights. Then we were to go to Bernice and say Helen wanted her to come and spend the evening. The idea, of course, was to get the colonel alone with Glenda.

The first part worked beautifully, but that stupid Bernice! She smiled at us and said:

"Run over to Helen's, chickies, and tell her I'll be over to-morrow afternoon instead. Say I'm so sorry, but this is one of the colonel's nights."

Did you ever! I could only stand there, everything in ruins at my feet. But Glenda spoke.

"I met Colonel Condenton on the street this morning," said Glenda, "and he said he couldn't come to-night!"

Bernice looked up.

"Did he tell you why—was there no reason?" Her voice sounded awfully funny.

"No," said Glenda. She told me afterward she couldn't think up a single thing, her knees were shaking so. (Of course I know you don't think with your knees, but they have more to do with it than a person who has never been told to give a narrative outline of the first act of "Macbeth," when they haven't read it, would think.)

Bernice was sitting at her desk, and she began pulling out letters and putting them back again in their pigeon-holes at a great rate. Then she said, without turning around:

"Tell Helen I will come to-night. Well, what are you waiting for? Hurry!"

You can just believe we hurried. I hadn't run so since I was a child.

That evening, which was to mean so much to Glenda—"the night of nights" was what I think she called it—I was asked to dinner. Glenda said she wanted me to be present at the dearest, the crowning moment of her life. The colonel and she would sit out on the porch, in the moonlight, and I might sit inside, close to the window, and listen. You can imagine how proud this made me. I realized that in doing this Glenda was doing all a girl could possibly do for a girl friend. There seem to be a good many "do's" in that sentence, but I think the point is clear—that I was thrilled by her generosity. I certainly was.

That night we were too excited to eat much dinner; at least, Glenda was,

and I never like to eat as much as I want to when I am visiting, of course. Glenda's father noticed she refused a third helping of pudding, and gave her a keen look. So she took another plateful and pecked at it, but I could see it was all pretense. I felt pretty excited myself. Did you ever study in history about the lord chamberlains who would do just about as they liked with the kings, and bring about anything they wanted by plotting and scheming? They *were* the kings, really, though the kings wore the crown. That's a figure, and Glenda corresponds to the king in it. I guess it isn't necessary to say who the lord chamberlain corresponds to. Our English teacher says something should be left to the imagination of the reader.

There are a great many things I ought to tell about before I get to the part where the colonel and Glenda are in the moonlight, and I am listening in the parlor, but I will only touch on them all lightly, as Miss Martin says, when we get up to give the principal events in Charles the First's reign and start in to talk for an hour on the one we know in hopes the bell will ring before we finish. So I will not dwell on the agony we suffered when Bernice, after dinner, changed her mind and thought she would not go to Helen's, after all, and our rapturous relief when she changed again and thought she would; I will not mention the trouble we had in persuading Mrs. Wilderson that the light in her bedroom was the only one in the house fit to read by; and I'm very sorry, but I'm not going to describe Glenda's dress, either. No, really I can't. It all takes time. It was very simple, anyway—only a little organdie made with ruffles edged with baby ribbon. The front was tucked in inch-wide tucks, and each tuck was edged with the same kind of ribbon that was on the ruffles. The skirt was perfectly plain—not trimmed at all, except for a ruffle on the bottom. The dress was white and the ribbons were blue. She looked exquisite in it. I would tell you all about these things if I had more room and space—Kitty

always puts that in her letters to her sweetheart—but I want to get on to the dénouement. (That's a French word, and I haven't time to explain it—you'll simply have to look it up.)

Well—(I thought I never would get to this part) at two minutes past eight he came! If Glenda's heart was beating any louder than mine he certainly must have heard it. Mine was bumping like a hammer—but my position may have had something to do with it. I was lying flat on my face in the parlor bay-window, and as there were chairs and tables there, and we hadn't had time to move them, I had to put my legs up on one of the chairs to get rid of them. Then, by lifting my head very carefully, I could see out on the porch through the long French windows. It sounds simple until you try it.

I never saw Colonel Condenton look older than he did that night, or Glenda younger. You could almost imagine they were a father and his daughter, greeting each other in the moonlight. The colonel's hair shone quite gray in the white light and Glenda's looked all golden, and soft, and wavy, like the curly head of a little child. I couldn't help wishing the colonel had looked a little younger, on this one night, at least. He couldn't help the gray in his hair, I suppose, or the lines in his face, but I had felt from the first that that mustache was his own fault. There was no excuse for it.

"Ah, colonell!" said Glenda, as he came up the steps.

He took both her hands in his. I trembled.

"Where's Bernice?" he asked. It was plain he wanted to know if at last he was going to be alone with Glenda. I raised up to see what would happen when she told him.

"Gone out!"

He could scarcely believe his ears. He sat down at once on a little rustic sofa, and Glenda took a chair near him. There was a silence. The katydid's and the other little night things were the only sounds you

heard. The moonlight pushed softly through the vines and made a pattern of leaves on Glenda's dress. Everything was perfect. I was crazy for them to begin.

"Where has she gone?" asked the colonel. I suppose I was in too much of a hurry, but it did seem a shame to be wasting all that moonlight.

"She went to Helen's," said Glenda, and he pulled his mustache. I think he was proud of it, though it seems incredible.

"Are you sure she went to Helen's?" he asked. He half rose.

"Yes, that is where she went," said Glenda. I caught myself in an awful yawn. They sounded like First Grade pupils:

"How old are you, Frank?"

"I am as old as my dog."

"How old is your dog?"

"My dog is as old as I am."

What on earth did they want to drag Bernice into it for? I felt almost bored. One of my legs was sound asleep, and the other was rubbing its eyes, so I knew it would be off, too, in a moment. I felt the way I did when I saved up two whole dollars to hear Schumann-Heink, and a great, fat woman came out on the stage. Oh, yes, she sang well, but I couldn't get over it. My elbows were sore from so much leaning on them, but I pushed up again for a look. The colonel had walked to the steps; he stood there a moment; then walked back; then he walked to the steps again, pulling his mustache; then he walked back quickly and sat down.

"No, I'll be hanged if I do!" he said.

I didn't see what he meant by that, but of course Glenda did, and I made up my mind to ask her to-morrow.

And now the colonel was speaking.

"May I talk to you, little girl," he said, "or would you be rather bored at anything such an old fellow could say?"

I thought that was awfully bad taste—his hinting at the difference in their ages. I'm afraid he hadn't any too much delicacy—his mustache

showed that. Glenda did not say anything. I must say I never saw Glenda appear to less advantage. She didn't look a day over fourteen—no one would have guessed she was fifteen and a half, and she didn't talk brilliantly or flash smiles at him or do any of the things they do on the stage or in books. I know perfectly that if it had been the theatre every one would have got up by this time and gone out. I would myself except that I thought something would happen soon, and then, too, I had got my left foot caught between the rungs of the chair, so I couldn't have gone if I had wanted to.

"I like to hear you talk," said Glenda, shyly. She didn't say it with a bit of meaning, and she was twisting her handkerchief all the time; but that was better than anything she had done yet, so I felt encouraged. Here was an opening for the colonel if he would take it. And he did.

"Tell me what you think of me, Glenda—take me all in all," he said, abruptly.

I thought that was pretty mean, putting it all off on Glenda that way. Of course it was leap year, but it seemed a sort of coward's trick; but things were getting more interesting at least.

"I—I like you," said Glenda. Of course, that was all she could say under the circumstances. Now it was his turn. I rose on my elbows. I had forgotten they were sore.

"Do you, Glenda?" There was joy in the colonel's voice. "And the others—your mother—father—?"

I was disgusted. What on earth had Glenda's mother and father got to do with it? I was so mad I gave the chair a vicious little kick, and it squeaked back at me.

"We all like you," said Glenda. Poor Glenda! A sudden admiration welled up in my heart for her. How nobly she was trying to help him!

"Do you think Bernice likes me?" asked the colonel. His face came out into the moonlight. He fixed his eyes on Glenda, and they were so earnest

and shining I forgave him the foolish question. I knew by the look on his face he was only talking to make conversation until he could get the courage to speak of his love for Glenda. It seemed awfully silly for a big man like him to be shy, but he certainly was.

Glenda's eyes lowered before his. She sat looking down at her clasped hands, just the way I've seen Mrs. Campbell do loads of times. It was a perfect pose. At that moment I was proud of Glenda.

"Bernice likes you, too," said Glenda. (Oh, no! there wasn't anything very much in her words, perhaps, but her voice was really beautiful.)

All at once my heart stopped beating. I thrill as I write it even now. I raised up so high the chair groaned and the little bones in my elbows cracked. *The colonel had put his arm around Glenda's waist!* For a moment there was silence, and well I knew how Glenda's heart was beating under those organdie ruffles.

"Glenda," he said, "do you know what I would do if I were twenty-five and good-looking?"

And now I have to admit a terrible thing. It was born in Glenda. Instead of looking up and not saying anything or perhaps murmuring, "Tell me!" what do you suppose she said?

"What would you do if you were twenty-five and good-looking?" said Glenda. Those were her words. I blush for her.

But the colonel did not seem to notice. He was looking out before him, his face, oh, so grave and sad. There was a long silence. It was coming. I held my breath. I scarcely dared to look, but of course I did. Then the colonel spoke.

"If I were twenty-five and good-looking," he almost whispered, "I would ask your sister to marry me."

I don't know what happened after that. I know the chair rung broke, for one thing, and I got awfully mixed up and bruised, too. I lay on the floor feeling sore in body for myself,

and in spirit for Glenda. Then all at once in the dark she came to me.

"Oh, Susan!" was all she said, but all her suffering, bitter disappointment, injured womanhood and outraged love rang in those two words. We sat on the floor in the dark, and I held her close to me. Then all at once came a light step on the piazza, and Bernice's voice cried out in surprise at seeing the colonel.

Well, we got some good out of that evening. We heard everything and saw everything. Glenda and I felt we had really underrated Bernice. We didn't know she had it in her. And the colonel made love exactly like William Faversham.

Glenda walked home with me, for it was as light as day. We slipped out of the back door together. We were very quiet on that walk; neither spoke a word. Then at my door she broke down.

"Susan, what do you think was the last thing he said to me?" she cried, clinging to my hands.

I shook my head.

"He—he said, 'How old are you now, little girl—eleven or twelve?'"

There are some griefs so great that though our hearts are bursting with sympathy and a wild wish to soothe, we can only stand before them aghast and dumb.

I wanted to end there. I think that would make such a fine concluding paragraph, but I have decided the story would be too sad. I know how upset I always get when a book ends badly, and it does seem a shame to get you all wrought up when by simply adding a little more I can make things brighter.

Glenda did not die. She did not have brain fever. Of course, her happy girlhood was shadowed, and she could never hope to be the gay young thing she was of yore—she told me this herself—but, as I say, she lived. In fact, she gained ten pounds that Summer, though the scales may have been wrong; Glenda seemed to think so. Colonel Condenton married Bernice, it is true, and Glenda had to be maid of

honor, but she carried off the dreadful situation like a heroine. I had the best time at that wedding! I wore pink. Glenda and I each ate three glasses of frappé and three slices of bride's cake and two of bridegroom's, not to mention the candy and stuff.

Glenda says she has forever relinquished thoughts of love. She is all for art again. You will find it hard to believe me, but she can now kick the chandelier in her parlor—the highest one in the house. It is a foot and two inches over her head! It has all come about by perseverance and a great ambition. But she hasn't as much time to devote to her work as she would like, because her mother has made her go to school again. I don't know whether they decided she had stopped growing, or what.

That's all, I think, except—oh, yes! there is one thing more. It doesn't belong to the story exactly, but I think it's stupid to just tell about the things that come in the story—any author can do that. The other day I took my book,

"Lovely Evelyn's Error; or, Flaming Hearts," out of Glenda's bookcase and carried it home with me. It was about time, for it was all dog-eared and finger-marked, and there were little blisters on some of the pages. I hadn't read half through before I made a wonderful discovery. The story of Lovely Evelyn's love and the story of Glenda's were almost exactly the same! Of course there was a little difference; for instance, Lovely Evelyn marries her lover in the end, and Glenda didn't, but lots of it was *identical*—even to the very words!

Now, wouldn't you think Glenda would have wanted to read it when I told her? But she didn't. She said she hadn't time. I asked her how the finger-marks got there, and she said her little brother, Alonso, must have made them. Alonso is seven. Strange how a love of literature will develop sometimes, even in the very young. Now, I remember when I was six—but this story isn't about me. *Es ist fini*—that's the French for "The End."



A STEEL TRUST

"I'LL try to steal her heart," quoth he,
"And win her sweetest smiles."

"I'll try to steel my heart," said she,
"Against Love's subtle wiles."

So both in steel began to deal
And, as you may opine,
Love soon declared a dividend
And started a combine.

MORTIMER CRANE BROWN.



NATURAL PERVERSITY

CRAWFORD—I suppose a man gets just as much good advice as he does bad.
CRABSHAW—Yes, but he is not as likely to follow it.

THE TALE OF A BOOK

By Edwin L. Sabin

EXHIBIT I

HER MOTHER—You have always been so interested in Helen, Mrs. Brown, that I'm going to tell you something; but you mustn't breathe it to anyone else. She is writing a novel!

EXHIBIT II

MRS. BROWN'S DAUGHTER—What do you think, girls? Helen Muse is writing a novel!

EXHIBIT III

LOCAL PAPER—It is reported on good authority that one of Clifton's talented young ladies is engaged on a novel. More anon.

EXHIBIT IV

HER MOTHER—Yes, but it's a secret. We can't understand how it got into the paper. Helen is quite put out. You come up some time, and maybe I'll let you see part of it.

EXHIBIT V

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Muse's novel on which she has been working for the past six months, is receiving its final touches, we understand. Those who have been permitted a glimpse at the manuscript predict for the book great success.

EXHIBIT VI

NEW YORK, September 2, 1901.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: We are obliged for your kind favor asking whether we would be disposed to consider, with a view to publication, a novel manu-

script by you entitled, "Heart for Heart."

We shall be pleased to receive your manuscript, and give it our best consideration.

Thanking you for the offer, we beg to remain,

Very truly yours,
BIGGE PUBLISHING Co.

EXHIBIT VII

EXPRESS RECEIPT—

CLIFFTON, Mo., September 4, 1901.

Received of Helen Muse,
pkg. said to contain MS.
Value asked and was. given as fifty
dollars. Marked Bigge Publishing
Co., New York.

(Etc.).

Endorsed, "Paid, 50c."

EXHIBIT VIII

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Muse has received several flattering letters from large Eastern publishing houses, asking that they be given a chance at her novel, "Heart for Heart."

EXHIBIT IX

NEW YORK, September 7, 1901.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, Mo.

DEAR MADAM: We beg to acknowledge receipt of book manuscript entitled, "Heart for Heart." It has been handed to our readers, and a report will be sent you as early as possible.

Thanking you for the favor, we are,
Yours very truly,
BIGGE PUBLISHING Co.

EXHIBIT X

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse and mother are planning to spend the coming Winter abroad.

EXHIBIT XI

NEW YORK, September 12, 1901.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We are returning herewith by express the book manuscript, "Heart for Heart," which you were kind enough to let us see. We regret that it does not strike us as available for our special needs.

We wish to thank you, however, for your courtesy in remembering us.

Respectfully yours,
BIGGE PUBLISHING CO.

EXHIBIT XII

EXPRESS NOTICE—Call and get package. Charges 50c.

EXHIBIT XIII

HER MOTHER—No; Helen has not decided what publisher is to have her novel.

EXHIBITS XIV-XCVIII INCLUSIVE

NAMELY—In groups of five, identical with Exhibits VII, IX, XI, save as to the publishing houses, which vary, and Exhibits XII, XIII.

EXHIBIT XCIX

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse and mother, who have been planning to go abroad this Spring, may remain at home, instead, necessitated by the claims of Miss Muse's book, now undergoing publication. It will be remembered that the trip was originally set for the Winter, but had to be postponed.

EXHIBIT C

NEW YORK, April 19, 1902.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: In reply to your inquiry of the 17th, we would say that our terms for the consideration and possible sale of a novel of not over 80,000 words are an advance fee of ten dollars, and a commission of ten

per cent. on the proceeds from a sale. We shall be pleased to receive your manuscript.

Respectfully,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CI

EXPRESS RECEIPT—

Date, April 21, 1902.
Manuscript sent to Agency for Writers, New York City. Paid, 50 cents.

EXHIBIT CII

NEW YORK, April 23, 1902.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We are in receipt of your favor of April 21, enclosing advance fee of ten dollars on your book manuscript, "Heart for Heart." The manuscript will be given our best attention, and we trust that we shall be able to place it for you successfully.

Thanking you for engaging our services, we are,

Yours truly,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CIII

HER MOTHER—No; we are not going abroad this Summer. Helen's book is occupying her attention, and she does not like to leave. The publishing business is so vexatious.

EXHIBIT CIV

MRS. BROWN'S DAUGHTER—I tell you what! I bet you Helen Muse isn't having such an easy time as she thought she would, with that book of hers. The idea, after all the talk!

EXHIBIT CV

NEW YORK, July 30, 1902.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: In reply to your query of the 23d, we regret to say that we have not succeeded in placing your book. We hope to do so yet. We are submitting it to publishers right along, and when we have anything definite to report we will communicate with you at once.

Yours truly,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CVI

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse has accepted a position as stenographer with Doitt, Toem & Brace, attorneys.

EXHIBIT CVII

NEW YORK, November 11, 1902.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: The Spec & Push publishing house, of this city, offers to publish your novel, "Heart for Heart," and allow you a royalty of ten per cent.

This is a reliable and energetic house, and has put out a number of successful volumes of fiction. We would advise you to accept the offer, especially since your novel has been declined by so long a list.

Let us know what you think.

Truly yours,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CVIII

NEW YORK, November 16, 1902.
MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We have your letter of the 13th, in which you authorize us to accept the offer made by Spec & Push, of this city, for the publication of your novel, "Heart for Heart." We are assured by Mr. Spec that the volume will receive a worthy presentation. The book will appear early in the Spring. We are sending you a contract for your signature, also a Spec & Push catalogue.

Congratulating you, we remain,

Faithfully yours,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CIX

HER MOTHER—Helen's publishers are Spec & Push, that big New York house, you know.

EXHIBIT CX

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse has resigned her position with Doitt, Toem & Brace. Her novel, "Heart for Heart," is to appear early in the Spring, from the press of Spec & Push, the well-known New York publishing house.

EXHIBIT CXI

LITERARY NOTE, in sundry metropolitan papers—Spec & Push announce on their list of Spring fiction a novel by Miss Helen Muse, a young Western writer of promise.

EXHIBIT CXII

TOODLE BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY.
December 27, 1902.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: May we not supply you with clippings regarding your forthcoming book, or upon any other subject in which you are interested? Our service is very complete, and we are confident that we can give you satisfaction. Our terms for one hundred clippings, in the space of a year, are \$5, payable in advance. We enclose a circular, illustrative of our work.

Hoping to hear from you, we are,
Yours truly,

PRESS CLIPPING BUREAU.

EXHIBIT CXIII

HER MOTHER—Yes, Helen is getting quite famous. If you only could see the letters she is receiving about her book!

EXHIBIT CXIV

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse, Clifton's talented young author, and her mother are going abroad for an extensive trip, after the appearance of the daughter's novel. While traveling, Miss Muse will gather material for another book. Clifton rejoices in her evident success in her chosen field of literature.

EXHIBIT CXV

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.
February 3, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We are sending you herewith first galley proofs of "Heart for Heart." Kindly return corrected proof at your earliest convenience. We shall forward more within a few days.

Very truly yours,
SPEC & PUSH.

EXHIBIT CXVI

HER MOTHER—Helen is not going out much, now. She is busy correcting proof, you know. Her publishers are in a great hurry; they want to get the book on the market. When are we going to Europe? Probably in September. Yes, it's very nice to be able to do so. When are her royalties paid? you ask. Oh, in February and August. That is the rule, I believe.

EXHIBIT CXVII

LOCAL PAPER—*The Palladium* received by mail this morning from the New York publishing house of Spec & Push a copy of "Heart for Heart," the novel by Miss Helen Muse, of this city. Clifton, as well as the world at large, will no doubt give the book the welcome that it deserves. (Fulsome review follows.) *The Palladium* will present a picture of Miss Muse in its next issue.

EXHIBIT CXVIII

TOODLE BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY.
March 28, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: Your order, with draft for five dollars enclosed, for one hundred clippings relative to your novel, "Heart for Heart," to be sent to you within one year, received. We will forward the clippings as fast as we come across them.

Thanking you for your patronage, we remain,

Very truly yours,
PRESS CLIPPING BUREAU.

EXHIBIT CXIX

ADVERTISEMENT—

HAVE YOU READ IT?

Heart for Heart!

Heart for Heart!! Heart for Heart!!!

Striking New Novel by a Western Writer,

HELEN MUSE.

First Edition Sold Before Publication!

\$1.00. Booksellers or by Post. \$1.00.

SPEC & PUSH, New York City.

EXHIBIT CXX

HER MOTHER—Yes, Helen is certainly getting fine reviews. All the papers speak well of it. I tell her she must write another book, while the iron is hot. Where are we going first? To Paris, I presume; then up the Nile, later in the year.

EXHIBIT CXXI

LETTERS—From numerous relatives and friends, expressing thanks for copies of "Heart for Heart."

EXHIBIT CXXII

TOODLE BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY.
May 12, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We are pleased to acknowledge receipt of your favor enclosing post-office order for \$5, to cover another one hundred clippings concerning you and your book, "Heart for Heart."

We take pleasure in continuing our service.

Yours truly,
PRESS CLIPPING BUREAU.

EXHIBIT CXXIII

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.
May 13, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: In reply to your communication of May 10, we would say that we are not prepared to report on how "Heart for Heart" is selling to the trade. A report will be made you in due time. We beg, however, to enclose the statement which you will find herewith, and suggest that the little account be cleared up, as is customary in dealing with our clients.

Very respectfully,
SPEC & PUSH.

SPEC & PUSH, PUBLISHERS.
LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.
Sold to Miss Helen Muse,
Clifton, Mo.

This bill is NET 30 DAYS unless agreed to the contrary.

1903
April—50 Heart for Heart, 2-5 off, \$30
Postage 5
—
\$35

Sent to names as per list
enclosed in yours of April 2.

EXHIBIT CXXIV

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.

May 16, 1903.

DEAR MADAM: We beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of recent date containing draft for \$35, for which accept thanks.

Very respectfully,
SPEC & PUSH.

EXHIBIT CXXV

ADVERTISEMENT—

"HEART FOR HEART!"
"HEART FOR HEART!"
"HEART FOR HEART!"

Critics All Praise It.

THE PEOPLE'S NOVEL.

SPEC & PUSH,
New York.

P. S.—Third Edition Now Ready!!!

EXHIBIT CXXVI

MRS. BROWN'S DAUGHTER—They say that Helen Muse is making just slathers of money from her novel. Isn't she lucky? It's taking her and her mother to Europe, anyway.

EXHIBIT CXXVII

LOCAL PAPER—A number of Clifton people were delightfully entertained last evening at the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. Lew Smith. Miss Helen Muse, Clifton's celebrated author, was present, and read selections from her novel, recently published, "Heart for Heart." The reading was prefaced by a little talk by her on practical authorship.

EXHIBIT CXXVIII

HER MOTHER—We will be glad to start on our travels abroad. Helen needs the change and rest. Poor girl,

she is quite worn out, with all the duties incident to her book, and the demands of her friends. But I tell her she must reconcile herself henceforth to belonging more or less to the public. That is a penalty of authorship. By the way, have you seen her new photographs? She just simply *had* to have some taken. Editors are after them, you know.

EXHIBIT CXXIX

NEW YORK, August 20, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: Your inquiry of the 17th is at hand. We have not received any royalty statement from the Messrs. Spec & Push, as yet, or we should have let you know. Possibly the report is being delayed by reason of vacations among the office force. We will look into the matter.

Very truly,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

EXHIBIT CXXX

HER MOTHER—We expect to leave about September 6. Helen has a few little matters to settle up with her publishers before she feels free to go.

EXHIBIT CXXXI

NEW YORK, September 1, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We enclose herewith the statement of Messrs. Spec & Push, as August settlement of "Heart for Heart."

We regret that the book does not seem to be doing as well as might have been anticipated. Possibly it may pick up, later.

Faithfully yours,
AGENCY FOR WRITERS.

SPEC & PUSH, PUBLISHERS,
LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK.

August 15, 1903.

Royalty Statement.

Heart for Heart,
Miss Helen Muse,
Clifton, Mo.

THE SMART SET

1903			
Mch 30	Published	300	
Aug 15	On hand	116	
	Editorial, etc.	151	
	Sold	33	
		<hr/>	
		300	300
	Royalty on 33 at 10 cts.	\$3	30
Mch 30	By charge, changes from copy in proof, by author	\$7	84
		<hr/>	
	Balance in our favor	\$4	54
	Please remit.		

EXHIBIT CXXXII

LITERARY NOTE (belated)—Spec & Push report that the successful novel, "Heart for Heart," by Miss Muse, is now in its twelfth thousand, and selling at the rate of seven hundred copies a day.

EXHIBIT CXXXIII

HER MOTHER—Yes, we have found it best to postpone our trip to Europe, for the present.

EXHIBIT CXXXIV

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.
September 5, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: We beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of recent date, containing draft for \$4.54, for which accept thanks.

Very respectfully,
SPEC & PUSH.

EXHIBIT CXXXV

LIVELY LANE, NEW YORK CITY.
October 24, 1903.

MISS HELEN MUSE,
CLIFTON, MO.

DEAR MADAM: Although we have used our best endeavors, we are sorry

to say that for some reason your novel, "Heart for Heart," is not selling at a rate to warrant us in continuing it on our list. In fact, it is not selling at all.

We now offer you the privilege of purchasing from us the plates, at a special price, and should be glad to have you take them off our hands. We also offer you our stock of 116 bound volumes at thirteen cents the copy.

Hoping to hear favorably from you, we remain,

Respectfully yours,
SPEC & PUSH.

EXHIBIT CXXXVI

LOCAL PAPER—Miss Helen Muse has resumed her position as stenographer with Doitt, Toem & Brace.

EXHIBIT CXXXVII

RÉSUMÉ—

DEBIT.

Expressage on MS.:

Out (19 at 50c.)	\$9 50
In (18 at 50c.)	9 00
Postage on proof	80
Books bought	35 00
Clippings	10 00
Charges for changing proof from copy	7 84
Photographs	6 00
Total	<hr/> \$78 14

CREDIT.

By royalties	\$3 30
Fame	30
Experience	74 54
	<hr/> \$78 14



THE CUT DIRECT

IF Fortune smile or Fortune frown,
I'm in the same condition—
Because she's always passed me by
Without a recognition.

A SUSPENDED SOUL

By Anna A. Rogers

"THE Ward-room officers of the U. S. S. *Texas* request the pleasure of Miss Truett's company at luncheon, Wednesday, May twenty-ninth, at twelve o'clock. Boats at the Hygeia Wharf at 11.45 A.M.

"There! doesn't that sound festive, Aunt Ruth? And our first day, too!"

"I hope you'll have what you call a 'perfectly lovely time,' Claire, dear." And the older woman looked up with an abstracted smile from the table upon which her arms were still spread in what space was left free from an orderly array of books and manuscript. Then the dark head, with its curious aigrette of snow-white hair in front, drooped again to the hand that carried its thought out into the world that knew her. She wrote on, oblivious, as we all become, of the brooding eyes of a customary love.

Claire's expression, as she contemplated her aunt, went through several changes, beginning with an almost motherly tenderness and ending with a vast amusement.

"Well, I like that, Aunt Ruth! Is that your little astronomical idea of chaperoning an enormously attractive niece? Do you suppose father asked you to come down here with me while his ship is in port—and poor mama snuffed out by the twins—just to have you sit calmly here, your feet wallowing in the Milky Way, and your head in The Dipper, and leave me to go raging about alone on ships and things?"

"Why, your father will be there!" And the dark eyes flashed up from the table in great surprise.

"Your father will be there!" Claire

confided her despair to the bay, seen from the nearest window. "So that's a specimen of your knowledge of affairs naval! Aunt Ruth, please just be mundane for five minutes, like a dear, please? Now, listen: the *Texas* is father's ship—I'm deeply touched by your accuracy—but—are you listening? Well, the captain never goes to the ward-room table unless he's asked, and he isn't; or it would be in our invitations, which it isn't. Thank goodness, too! They know, the dear things, that I have to modify my ever-popular indiscretions when father is listening. So, you see, you've got to go."

"You don't mean to say that that invitation means—me? Why—!" Ruth Truett arose and went to the window, looking out in silence for a moment. When she turned, her face was flushed and moved by some hidden emotion. She stood very erect and had the slight, undeveloped figure of a young girl, innocent of disguises. The lines and coloring of the face were good; the expression stern, or, rather, unquicken, save in the fine, dark eyes. The mouth, where lies a face's history, was that of a child with nothing to record, nothing to regret.

For six years she had held the office of private secretary and assistant to the chair of astronomy at one of New England's larger universities, and had made one entirely original mathematical calculation deemed important in the astronomical world at large, the only world Miss Truett, aged thirty-four, comprehended in the least. Incidentally, her niece, Claire, daughter of her favorite brother, thought it a pity

and had schismatic plans secreted in the recesses of her pretty, blond head.

"What I ran in for, aunty, was to see what you had to wear to the ship's *à la fourchette*."

"Why, I'll show you all I have. But, Claire—now, dear, don't laugh; I want to please you above all things—but, frankly, what on earth is a woman of my age, my limitations, to talk about when she's dropped down among a lot of men, who are—just men, with no direction given to the—the current of conversation? I feel so ridiculously nervous about it, somehow."

"Blessed little aunty mine! Is she frightened to death? Why, my Lady of the Skies, I want you to hold your head high, and look and feel the vastly superior being you really are to us all. For heaven's sake, Aunt Ruth, don't get into one of your humble moods! I'll see that you look stunning; you have only to rest on your laurels—for they're lots more scared of you, of course."

"Now, Claire, you don't suppose they've ever heard a syllable about me?" Miss Truett gave an excited little laugh that Claire somehow found very pathetic.

Science sat alone and neglected upon the table by the window, while its quondam devotee and her niece held a dress rehearsal in the adjoining room, from which they presently emerged, Miss Truett, senior's, dark face in a blaze, her smooth hair awry; and Miss Truett, junior's, fair face full of a calm purpose.

"This gray *crêpe de chine* has possibilities, but the hat's a suburban horror, Aunt Ruth. I'll wire at once to Baltimore for some Irish point, and some huge pink roses, and a——"

"Pink roses! No, Claire, I refuse utterly to make an old fool of myself, even for the *Texas*!"

"I don't know what your age may be, but, whatever it is, you don't look it, and I know what I'm about."

The genus man, *per se* and objectively considered, had no special terrors for Miss Truett; her life had been divided equally between undergraduates and telescopes; but the species now before

her lens caused her agonies of shyness and self-depreciation, and the hand was like ice which she held out to the officer of the deck, who greeted them at the head of the gangway of the *Texas* that Wednesday morning. Happily, the navigator, Lieutenant Bulger, at once took verbose possession of her, and assumed her interest in barbettes, capstans and range-finders, and so filled in the gnawing moments before the "Ble'kfas' leady, sir!" of the Japanese steward sent them laughing and chattering down "the ladder" to the ward-room.

Miss Truett was given the place of honor on the right of the executive officer, Lieutenant-Commander Rockhill, a man even more famously at home in the world of society than she was in the world of stars. He was a large, very handsome man, smooth-faced, with gray hair parted down the middle of a finely domed head. All the lines in his face stood for strength; the expression, for a big-hearted tenderness, which had survived a rather complete exploitation of life's possibilities. His greatest charm was his deep, flexible voice. He had not been on deck, and so was presented to Miss Truett by Lieutenant Bulger, whom she was childishly relieved to find upon her right, Claire being at the other end of the table, down in the "Fourth Ward," where reigned youth, hilarity and general foolishness.

The executive ran an appraising blue eye over Miss Truett, sighed, and wished the affair was over. However, she was an immense improvement upon the woman his peevish imagination had conceived, while brushing his hair with his usual circumspection in his state-room ten minutes back. After certain preliminary humorous remarks along a well-worn track of his own, he found himself watching for Miss Truett's astonishingly infantile smile, and the fleeting glances of clear, shy eyes; and he began to wonder if it was not another of Bulger's many blunders to have announced her, in felicitous phrase, as "the Captain's blue-stocking sister."

But the "bull" doctor across the table settled the doubt by suddenly interjecting what he considered a happy remark as from one pantologist to another, in recognition of Miss Truett's exalted reputation, likely to suffer neglect in such Philistine hands as Hal Rockhill's.

"Do you quite endorse, Miss Truett, this evolution theory as applied to flora—that complexity of coloration indicates advance in the scale of plant life?"

His voice was high-pitched and of an inflection which told of a homely social genesis. The table had become strangely quiet. A ward-room convention was being outraged, and an implacable jury of twelve would "see" the "big" doctor later. In the meantime, the "little" doctor, down by Claire, nervously nibbled an olive and blushed for his corps.

And then Miss Truett's low voice replied with the simple humility of a child:

"I am so sorry, but I know almost nothing of botany."

An electric current of cruel joy shot from eye to eye among the officers, and a new joke had been added to the mess's store.

"The time has come," the Walrus said, "to talk of many things," murmured the first lieutenant to himself. With one more look at his right-hand neighbor's very effective pink roses, to reassure his deep conviction that the wearer of such cannot be altogether recreant to her sex, he gathered together his well-drilled forces and, looking concentratedly into her shrinking eyes with his own very bold ones, said in so low a tone no one else could possibly hear:

"I wonder if Miss Truett will pardon an impertinence, and if she's human enough to tell me what that stuff is called of which her gown is made? I think it's so very pretty! I'd like to get some for Gladys—that's my little girl. I have to be both mother and father to her, and keep an eye out for feminine fripperies. She's nine; do you think it would be the right

thing? I've always liked those soft, slippery things. I think that's one of the prettiest dresses I ever saw," he repeated, softly, his eyes caressing the long sweep of draperies next to him.

There was no answer, and, looking up, he was aghast at discovering the distinguished Miss Truett blushing painfully, her eyes on her plate, in a paroxysm of shyness. After one quick glance at the rare spectacle of a grown woman blushing, and a sudden relish for the dear sweetness of it, he determinedly caught Claire's attention, and, raising his glass to her, cast himself tellingly into the tumult surrounding her. In the first lull after a sharp fusillade of nonsense that ran around the whole table, he said, quietly, to Miss Truett, not looking at her:

"I beg your pardon. It was an outrageous familiarity. I ought to have known—I do know, Miss Truett—"

"Oh, no! don't think that. It's quite different. It's—it's my life—so different from other women's. I'm not accustomed to anyone noticing my—my appearance, or saying a—personal thing like that to me. Isn't it too ridiculous? I'm so humiliated. Please forget it. It's so hideously incongruous at my age. Oh, I know, I see it all! I told Claire—" Her voice broke, and her laugh died abruptly. The frightened brown eyes met his for an instant, and he saw that they were full of unshed tears. He sat back, too amazed to speak. Then, with a start, he leaned toward her and said, very gently:

"May I tell you about my Gladys? She's quite the most wonderful child in the world, you know." But Lieutenant Bulger put in a loud claim for attention, and it was willingly accorded him. Yet that mysterious moment of distress caused at once a tearing away of several of the multiple veilings in which each of us walks, jealously swathed from head to foot. Determined to make her forget it, Mr. Rockhill stayed by Miss Truett after the luncheon,

when Captain Truett sent for them all to come to his cabin, and even when the navigator's relentless energy compelled the ladies to crawl and climb all over the battle-ship from the wing passages to the bridge. In fact, Lieutenant-Commander Rockhill went much farther than he meant to that afternoon, and arranged to call the next day and take Miss Truett to see parade at the fort, quite as if he was just out of the Academy! It amused him to see how innocently unaware she was that he was one of the most sought-after men in the navy.

When the boats were alongside and they parted at the foot of the gangway, he stood a moment looking after the launch, and congratulated himself upon the fact that he had successfully resisted a strong, selfish desire to make Miss Truett, senior, blush again.

"Whither away, giddy little aunty, so early in the morning?" sang Claire, three days later, as she entered her aunt's room and found her equipped for the outer world, looking very fresh and young and with a radiance and exhilaration in face and manner that instantly caught her niece's attention.

"Didn't I tell you? Oh, no! the note found its way to me too late last night."

"The note?"

"Why, Mr. Rockhill thinks, even in the face of your negative, he'd like a dress for Gladys as nearly like my gray as Norfolk will yield."

"Oh, he does?"

"Yes; so he suggested my going up with him on this early boat. He has business at the navy-yard, anyhow, and thinks I ought to see the docks there. Think of it! I've never seen a dock! Good-bye, Clärchen. Don't do too much to-day; remember we have that progressive something at the fort to-night." Re-opening the door, she added: "Oh! and Claire, I want to buy one of those white veils with tiny black dots you spoke about. What shall I ask for? You used a—a cryptic word, and I was awake half the night

trying to recall it. I think it begins with M."

"And there sits Astronomy!" cried Claire, when left alone, looking at the deserted table with its vacant chair. Suddenly, she exclaimed, with violence:

"You shall not flirt with the dear, innocent baby-woman! You have me to reckon with, I'll have you know, Lieutenant-Commander Rockhill!"

Innocent of anathema, Mr. Rockhill was almost ashamed of the way he enjoyed that absurd, and purposely fruitless, shopping expedition with Miss Truett; the comical miseries of their unspeakable luncheon; the stroll about the old town; and the final visit to the navy-yard where, his business being despatched in half an hour, he rejoined her at the quarters of the captain of the yard, whose tiny wife gave them a cup of tea and an exhibition of volubility for which she was famed throughout the service.

As the little steamer carried them back to Old Point, there was a marked flexibility and ease in their relation. Miss Truett felt entirely at home with him, and petal after petal of her closely foliated nature expanded in the sunshine of his consummate tact; and, on his side, the contact with her cultivated mind and entirely uncultivated emotions had aroused quite a disused set of his rather worn sensibilities.

Once, after a silence, she said, wistfully:

"Utterly relieved and refreshed"—where have I seen that?"

"Emerson, I think."

"Oh, yes! 'Spiritual Laws'!"

"No, it isn't. I'm of the cult. It's in his essay on 'Love.'"

"His captions count for so little, don't they?" she said, hastily.

"Do you think so?" he queried, smiling down at her averted face.

As he parted from her on the wharf, a sudden grimness in his manner made the pretty blossoming in her face shrivel, mimosa-like, before his keen eyes.

"There must be no more of this," he muttered, as he sprang into

the ship's whale-boat and took the ropes.

But there was more—much more—and the days sped by, uncounted. Claire had a comic realization that she was now the real chaperon, with all the anxieties of the office; but, as she watched, the fierce look died out of her clear young eyes, and a something clutched her at the throat now and then.

Then, one morning, the telegram came from the Department ordering the ship to join the European squadron at Smyrna. In forty-eight hours she swung ready for sea. At such junctures the executive officer is fortunate who gets an hour alone, as Rock-hill said to himself as he stepped into the after-dinner boat, unconscious of any intention save that of many hasty farewells at the hotel. After twenty minutes of absent-minded badinage around the hop-room—where he saw Claire absorbed and happy in affairs presumably connected with Lieutenant Bulger's white, set face, and the "little" doctor's radiant, rosy one—he found himself rushing with roving eyes in and out of crowded rooms and along corridors and verandas in search of one face.

Once having grasped that fact, with his usual directness he went straight to the desk and sent his card up to Miss Ruth Truett. When the message came, asking him to go up to her reception-room, he laughed aloud, to his own astonishment and that of the colored bearer of the tidings. Then he went over to the flower-stand, and bought all the white flowers there were.

"They must be pure white," he said, so gravely that the woman at once scented further orders in the same line. Carrying them with all that open struggle between a man's disrelish for the obvious, and still greater disrelish for not having his own sovereign way, he knocked at her door.

"Well, it's good-bye to-night, Miss Truett. I suppose you've heard, of course. I've not had a moment till now. We sail at midnight to-night, as there's a moon. I'm under a flag of

truce, you see, so you're in honor bound to be good to me."

The color flew to her face, pale and stern when he entered, as she took the flowers from him with only a murmur of thanks. She fitted nervously about, getting together a rather meager array of vases, and he watched her in disappointed silence as she devoted her entire attention to the arrangement of the flowers. She inhaled each one, petting it with her delicate fingers, sometimes holding one up for his admiration, till he wished them back on the stand where his infelicitous impulse had found them. She avoided his eyes with a coquetry of which he had hitherto deemed her absolutely incapable, and of which she was in truth unconscious.

Finally, he jerked out, irritably:

"Good heavens, Miss Truett, those confounded things are not going away—and I am."

Then she turned and looked at him fully for the first time, dropping all her flowers, and cried:

"Oh, I am so purblind, so—everything! But, you see, people don't give me flowers very often, and I was so pleased. In all your life, Mr. Rock-hill, did you ever see such a stupid woman as I am?"

"I certainly never did!" he agreed; and the laugh which followed somewhat broke the restraint.

"A sailor has his little fads, and one of them is that he likes to fool himself into thinking some woman is sorry he's going, the night before he sails. Nonsensical vanity, of course, but perhaps the memory of it keeps him sane."

"You think?—you don't think?—Why, the flowers were just you!" she burst out, recklessly. Too late she saw the drift, and sprang to her feet excitedly. Following blind instinct, she fled to her writing-table, piled with long-neglected papers. Then she cried out:

"Oh, I cannot go on! I don't know your world. I'm all in the dark and alone. I belong here among my books and papers—go away out of my life, and leave me with them!"

She threw out her hand and struck the table with a sudden passion. Finally she fell into the chair and buried her face. Then the executive officer of the *Texas* knew exactly what had been the matter with him for the last five weeks.

He went to her, tried to speak, cleared his voice and at last said, with a gentleness this woman had yet to learn stands in men for strong passion controlled:

"No man who ever lived, or ever will, can be worthy of such a woman as you; but we go on hoping for heaven, just the same, knowing we don't deserve it—the worst of us and the best. I'm praying now for mine, and truly, truly, dear, I'm not the worst, the very worst."

"Oh, hush, hush! Do not say one word more to me. Just go, please," she moaned; "I am unspeakably humiliated!"

"I do not wish to go," he said, doggedly.

"It is not your fault—I comprehend that perfectly—that I—that I did not understand the manner of man you are," she went on, in a choked voice. "I was told yesterday by—by some one—when we heard nothing from you since the ship's orders came—told the truth: that men do not take—take women seriously, that they come and go in your lives; that women must be proud—always proud; that it's a sort of game. I should not have seen you to-night—oh, I should not have seen you! I do not know how to play the game."

"I have something to say to you, Miss Truett. Will you listen to me?"

With a violence that thrilled him, she cried: "Unless what you say stands for the simple truth as your mother taught you it at her knee—go!"

"It stands for the simple truth my mother taught me," he repeated, gravely.

She gave the prolonged, tremulous, indrawn sigh that a child does when the tide of grief begins running out.

He had all he could do to keep from shouting, for was not the door of his heaven lamenting on its golden hinges?

"Dear little girl!—for so you seem to me—I doubt if there's a year's difference between your heart and Gladys's. You'll come to us—to Gladys and to me? We need you so. Please answer me—you'll come?"

There was no reply.

"Heavens, child! do you think a man asks a woman to be his wife to please *her*? You don't know us! Listen: I love you, I have from the very first hour. Since Gladys's mother died when she was a wee baby, I have not taken women seriously—no, you are right. Nor is my pleading any other than the old cry of all men to all women since the beginning: 'I am not worthy of your love, but—love me! I want you, only you, with your man's brain, your child's soul. And such is the brazen effrontery induced by a military life that I warn you now, whether you wish it or not, I'm going to marry you.'"

Was it a low laugh or a sob that he heard? Leaning over her, he tenderly laid his hand upon her bowed head, drawing in his breath sharply as the thrill of it struck him. And then came her answer; she unclenched her right hand, a finger at a time, slowly lifted it to her head and laid it gently upon his hand, pressing it down into her soft hair. And when he raised her face it was resplendent with emotion; the woman's nature long in suspension was at last precipitated.

"Now, dear, if you'll treat me no better than you did that beast of an old pond-lily over there, of which I was so jealous a moment ago, I'll try and be satisfied. No, that wasn't it at all! What a poor memory for so noted a scientist! Come, look up; I'll show you."

An hour later, Claire dashed into the room, followed by her father; but after one glance she turned and laid loving hands upon him, pushed him out into the hall and kissed very ten-

derly his bewildered face, whispering something that sent him away on tip-toe. Then she reentered the room, closed the door gently and locked it.

Aunt Ruth was sitting alone with her lap full of flowers, her cheeks ablaze, her head bowed low, the hair loosened and rippling about her ears.

The girl knelt swiftly beside her, and threw her arms around her.

"Oh, I see it all, precious aunt, and I'm so glad, so glad!"

"Claire, I do feel so happy and so—so utterly foolish, somehow. Do you think it will ever wear off?" And her niece laughed till she cried.

"I have a confession to make, Clärchen, and I must make it to-night. Keep your arm close, close about me, or I cannot tell you. I've always hated science—always; in my heart, I mean! There is just some specialized faculty in my head for higher mathematics, which seems to bear not the faintest relationship to the rest of me. I drifted into the secretaryship when it became necessary after father's death, and my whole life has paid the penalty of that sudden inspiration that came to me that night I was making a calculation in rotative velocity—I saw a short cut—that was my crime. Well, from that hour, years ago, I have lived up—or down—to that wretched little moment of 'pure intuition,' as some one wisely calls pure mathematics. Wherever I go I'm forced to meet abstracted creatures who assume that I want to talk axial rotation! I go to a reception, and there are all sorts of other fascinating people there, but I never meet them; they avoid me as if I were a sort of mental monstrosity. I go to a dinner, and I have molting old birds, supposedly of my feather, on either side of me, if not also vis-à-vis. You can't think what I've been through! And all those years I wanted to dance, and be taken in to supper and—why, Claire, they never used to think I wanted to taste, talk, hear, feel, see anything but—stars! Half the time it's the world's obtuse, uninspired kindness that kills. It spoiled Europe for me. I took my vacation over there

four years ago, longing for pictures, for music, for shops, for driving about to see just the people, and—Claire, I was simply dying to sit in a rathskeller and drink out of a stein—are you, too, shocked, dear? Well, I began all wrong. I took a letter to a tutor at Brasenose College, I presented it, unfortunately—somehow it had a *déagé*, unfettered sound to it, and I thought I was safe. Well, Brasenose spoiled Oxford for me, utterly. There I was again—the same shop talk—in a different accent—the same vague, dreamy, unhumorous men who didn't care how they were dressed, and less how I was. From there they passed me on to *une chaire d'astronomie* in Paris, and I went to—lectures. It was the same thing in Geneva and in Rome. You see, I don't know how to hurt people's feelings in a well-bred way—it's an art. Very learned men lent themselves good-naturedly, and very absent-mindedly, for the moment to a courteous patronage of a duodecimo American Sonya Kovalevsky—no less than three of them called me that! They thought they were pleasing me, those very gracious old men, and all the while my heart was crying out to be allowed to live; longing, longing just to have some one look me in the eyes—as I've seen other men look into other women's eyes—and, looking, 'find grace in his sight.' And, Claire, *he* did just that—that very thing at the very first! And I knew in a flash—just that same old intuition—I knew it had come to me at last; and I lost all control for a moment right there at the ward-room table on the *Texas*. You must have noticed it—he did! The doctor—the senior surgeon, don't you say?—tried to put me again under the same old receiver—didn't you hear? But I have come out of my prison into the world of love to-night! *He* battered down the walls in a strange, rough way, but when he found me within—cowering, frightened—he was so gentle, so tender! It is all more beautiful than I ever dreamed, and I am so terribly, terribly happy!"

The long, deep moan of a man-of-

war whistle came from the harbor, and Claire sprang instantly to her feet and flew to the open window.

"It's the *Texas*! She's heading about slowly. Come, Aunt Ruth. Watch the bow a minute, and the shore beyond, and you'll see."

Ruth Truett stood silent, looking

with dilated eyes, and, after one long sobbing inhalation, she whispered:

"So *this* is what it is to be a woman! To begin really to live! There's always a ship to be watched or waited for, going or coming, to the end. Ah, Claire, put your arms about me. I'm not very brave, my child."



BEAUTY AND LOVE

BEAUTY is the child of Love—
What he looks upon is fair,
Though it be an empty glove
Or a lock of faded hair.

Where he lights, the sunshine plays;
Round about him flowers bloom;
Spring, for him, lengthens her days,
Scattering all her rich perfume.

Work, if sweetened by his smile,
Is as light as heart of boy
When he, roving mile on mile,
Takes the world but for his toy.

Love may do whate'er he will,
Play his tricks, or sullen grow,
Beauty is his shadow still,
Following him where he doth go.

Let the fickle god depart—
All that's fair in darkness dies,
For of all he is a part,
And alone all beautifies.

RT. REV. JOHN LANCASTER SPALDING.
(*Bishop of Peoria.*)



HOW HE KNEW

MR. MILLIONS—The music at the opera was very poor indeed.

MRS. MILLIONS—Why, John! You seemed to enjoy it immensely.

MR. MILLIONS—I did, my dear; that's how I know it was poor music.

"MEN CALL IT CONSCIENCE"

By Mrs. Henry Dudeney

MARY PESKETT, who gathered simples, was walking through the woods. For her child-like yet cunning craft, she needed woods—little dark copses of oak and beech; subtle plants, for healing, grew hidden there.

It happened to be the first of January. The New Year came, beautiful and irresistible, across the brightening sky. Here, in the wood, although the north wind chanted in the upper branches, there were shelter and pretty promise beneath.

Mary knew the woods, and was peaceful in them. Woods laid large hands along her brow—that was puckered with the struggle to live. She knew the woods; she loved them. She missed nothing of their beauty—fairy wild-carrot leaves, branching in a tracery along the sloping banks; dead nettles flowered all up with ivory buds; the curled and brilliant leaves of lords and ladies springing from their Winter prison.

She had her basket and trowel. Now and again she darted forth, bent down, and dug up a treasured root. She was the village doctor and a wise woman.

To look upon!—a pretty, withered old creature. Yet not so old, after all—not old at all; only the village women appear to jump straight from fresh girlhood to a haggard and toothless state. Her cheeks were rosy streaked and wrinkly. She looked like a keeping apple; one of those jovial orchard things that lie on yellow straw all the Winter through—lie there and laugh at frost.

She put up her hand, and smoothed

afresh her decorous hair. Gray hair! And yet she was not so old—only hollowed and pointed by the struggle to live—just for bread and shelter; enough to keep her on the warm earth. She had such a dread of going under the earth and so abiding—until that rousing sound for which the patient dead wait.

She stooped to dig an early root of spear-mint for the doctoring of Betsy Morris who had lost her memory—and shuddered as she dragged the tenacious root to light and shook the mold from it. She could not endure the prospect of making this damp, brown ground her home.

"Though theer's the Resurrection mornin' fer sure," she said, thoughtfully, sniffing at the mint before she packed it choicely in the basket.

Her trade, secret and lonely, lent itself to solitary speaking, earnest questioning and patient answering—from the same mouth. Sometimes she fancied that there were two Mary Pesketts gathering simples in the wood—one to query and the other to satisfy.

"But the Resurrection mornin' 'll be a long time comin'. An' I'm fond o' my flesh. I mind when this yere old skinny arm wur white an' firm."

She rucked up her stuff sleeve, and smiled.

"When I gits the glorified body they tells on in the prayer book, likely I'll be pretty Mary Peskett agen."

"You be pretty Mary Peskett still, though not so young as might be," growled a deep voice.

She jumped, and dropped the basket. Her mother had been a simple gatherer

before her, and she had grown up to tales of secrets that the woods held, of monsters lurking and eyes ceaselessly watching, of awesome things that might befall a body in this fast place.

"It's on'y you, Elias Angel!" Both her lean hands were tight against her shawl. "You gied me a fair fright. My heart's none so strong."

"Females warn't meant ter hev the care o' hearts," he said, laughing in a rather forced way, and making a gawkish, sidelong movement toward her.

"I've had the offer o' yourn fer twenty year," she retorted, softly, and looking down.

"It's yourn still, ef you cares to take it."

The blacksmith looked on this little red-cheeked woman, prematurely old, with a queer glance—half dove, half vulture.

She dropped back—as far from his ardor as the stile would allow. It was a gray stile, with a wide and polished upper bar. Lovers sat regularly on it all the long Summer evenings.

"I couldn't hev no dealin's—o' love—wi' one what's sold his soul ter the devil," she said, trembling.

Elias Angel was a big man. He was strong and dark—with his powerful trade. But he quailed.

"Theer's no dealin's atween the devil an' me," he said, stoutly, after a pause.

"But you've brought a many ter ruin. Theer wur Marster Jaggs, as farmed Boxalland. It fair broke his heart acause he couldn't pay up the interest."

"Ef folks will borror money you can't blame him as lends."

"He died wi' a curse fer you, hangin' on the lip, Elias. I smoothed his piller ter the larst. I laid 'un out."

"You lays ivery one out when the time comes." The blacksmith looked with aversion at her withered hands.

"You're the ruin o' farmin' folk," she proceeded, eloquently—having found her text. "Think on the Widder Daborn. She died in the 'sylum, though I dosed her free wi' moonwort, which be a fine thing fer lunyticks."

"Mary," said the big man, humbly, "I seed you pass my door an hour or more back. I wur bound ter foller. The fire in my bosom burned hotter than thet from the forge. Ain't theer a plant in your basket as 'll heal a lover's quarrel?"

"We was niver lovers. God forbid! Theer's a summat in me—cold and strict"—she pressed her hand tellingly at her side—"what tells agen matterimony."

"Wi' all them roots an' all your skill," he persisted, "theer must sure be a charm ter make folks cheerful an' soft."

"I've knowed the corncockle ter smooth a quarrel," she admitted, thoughtfully, "an' basil makes you fine an' cheerful, so it do. But theer niver wun't be no peace atween us two, Elias. Why," her small body lifted itself to sudden drama, "you got a hold on me, too. Like as not you'll sell my bed—pore mother's own goose feathers—same as you did the Widder Daborn's."

"Maybe," he admitted, with a kindling eye. "Love's near hate. I'll own thet. It's a little step atween the two."

"You could sell away the cottage I wur borned in," she went on, tears struggling in her voice—making it wildly real, making it drop, and then rise into silly top notes. "Feyther and mother built it when they was coortin'. They begged a bit o' ground from the lord o' the manor—you could do it in them days. An' they built it o' mud and beams, jest sticks an' dirt, loike the little matin' birds builds nests."

"Ef you'd marry me, Mary Peskett, you should set idle in the parlor all the long days."

"I could niver bide in your parlor wi' thet picter over the hearth, Elias."

His face grew violent.

"I'm bound ter hev it, I tells you," he returned, sullenly. "It keeps off them what's worse. My—my head," he suddenly glared forth, and she felt afraid of him. "I've a shootin' pain at times, an' I feels all dizznified."

"Poppies is good for the headache," she returned, professionally, viewing

him with her gentle blue eyes, "acause their seed-pods is shaped like a head. Thet stands ter reason."

"Mary, I got a mortgage on yer cottage. But ef sur be we was married, I'd burn the deed on our wedded hearth."

"I ain't fer marriage." She pursed together her sad, mean lips. "Some turns agen it. Thet's natural—wi' them what knows the feelin'. I went ter a wise 'ooman when I wur a gell, an' she looks up quick from the cards she wur sortin'. 'Theer ain't no sweet-heart fer you, my wench, dark or fair,' she ses. An'—an' then, Elias, folks do say as the devil's got a muggeridge on your smithy. He's bin seed theer. Marster Jaggs see 'un the larst time he set in your parlor. But he niver come beyant the door, the Evil One didn't. An' he shrunk up inter a little pulin' devil as you could ha' scrunched in your palm, when he seed the picter above the hearth."

"Old Jaggs wur a liar, Mary Peskett."

Again she was dismayed by this blacksmith's familiar, yet dreadful, face, and by the glances he shot about the wood. She caught up her basket.

"Well, I must be gooin' on ter the village, Elias. Theer's Susan Wells sick o' the jarnders, an' dandelion's the cure fer it acause it's yaller. Yarbs an' sickness goos together, as you m' say."

She began to tick the village invadings off on her fingers.

"Theer's Susan wi' jarnders, an' Betsy Morris not by no means the 'ooman she wur, an' all Mrs. Nix's little 'uns down wi' the measles. Other folks' pains is my gains."

"Come an' live along o' me, Mary, an' take your ease."

He looked yearningly at her quickly mumbling mouth. The loss of her front teeth gave her a plaintive lisp which made him sorry for her.

"I'm all fer the single state," she said, ponderingly. "An', 'sides which, you've wronged the widdered an' fatherless. This yer money-lendin' I don't hold wi'."

"Money's a fine thing," he told her, stretching his mouth in a naiser's grin.

"I'm allus in want on it," she admitted, pathetically. "I can't barely keep body an' soul together. Theer's nowt in my bit o' garden ground but taters. Most years I sets runner-beans, but I've kind o' lost heart fer fancy feedin'. Yet I ain't no friend ter taters."

"I could sell you up, stick an' stone, Mary Peskett."

"Thet's a true word," she admitted, holding the corner of her print apron to dab at her downcast eye.

"I could send you ter the poor-house."

"It's a hard place ter die in, Elias Angel. But I wouldn't niver lay me in pauper ground," her head lifted. "Theer's a Peskett grave an' a Peskett tombstone in the churchyard. It's near the wall. When I wur little an' feyther died, I useter fancy he'd catch the tune o' 'All ye the Works' on Sunday mornin's. Thet wur his favorite; nowt wur forgot in the praisin'."

"I wun't talk on church." He looked away through the woods, and she wondered what he saw.

"You dursn't. You niver steps beyant the porch. The Evil One as owns you weights your pore foot, Elias."

"Ef you ses another word about me an' him, I'll kill you as you stands."

The blacksmith lifted his great fist. Mary was afraid of him. She had never noticed before what a big man he was. How terrible a big man could be!

"Love's purt' nigh hate," he continued. "I've bin your patient love fer twenty year. An' you goos an' throws the devil in my face."

She was attracted by his violence; cherishing and dreading it in the same quick heart-beat.

"No other chap niver gied me so much as a soft look," she admitted, stepping closer. "We're full old fer coortin', Elias; well on fer forty. We'll be a laughin'-stock wi' all these young gells an' fellers, but—"

"You're a-gooin' ter take me, Mary?"

His hot, odd passion for her flooded his face.

"It's—it's suddint. An'—an' I'm fixed in my ways."

"Twenty year I've bin a-waitin'."

"Ef you'll give up evil doin'; an' ef you'll hand back ter pore folkse the papers you holds; an'—an', Elias, ef you'll goo regular ter church an' hev the Sacrament at Easter," she stipulated, with a lingering, distasteful sigh—for wedlock.

He had gone chalky, shockingly white.

"I'll hold ivery paper," he said, savagely. "Them as wants 'em can come an' lift the coffin-lid when I lays dead. An' they can draw 'em out o' my stiff hand—ef they dares."

"You—you talks very wild, Elias."

Her timid words were his tonic. He relaxed. He looked ashamed, afraid, browbeaten. He drew his breath so quickly, his black eyes shot such an agonized and beseeching flash that she—village doctor, village nurse, the last to touch the dead gently—became alarmed. Instinctively, she looked down at her basket. But there was nothing ready. These roots and sprigs were only the potentialities of healing.

She marked the melancholy heave of the blacksmith's chest. She understood nothing at all. They passed in dramatic array—all the emotions that chase through the blood of a man long rejected: a man cheated of his true mating. Human passion had never touched her and never could. She was one of those celibate souls that are scattered white through all ranks of women. Her true happiness would have been to wash tremblingly around God's board. A crust, a cell, much silence—all the placid ecstasy which the Faith affords.

Elias looked at her—with eloquent hopelessness. Then he spoke—with a startling difference.

"Theer's two pound interest from you ter me payable on Lady Day."

He spoke calmly; the most dreadful calmness—to her, it was the cruel delirium of the passing bell.

"A hundred pound I lent your

feyther. The house ain't worth pullin' down, but——"

"I wur borned in it. I did look ter die in it," she put in, valiantly.

"But theer's nigh on an acre o' ground, all frontage ter the road."

"You'd niver sell me up an' goo buildin' in my garden, all old orchard trees, Elias."

"Love's close bedfeller wi' hate, Mary Peskett."

"I takes no 'count o' your loves an' your hates," she wailed, looking on him in perplexity; "but wheer the two pund's a-comin' from, God in His heaven on'y knows—unless sur be theer's a good bit o' sickness in the village. An' it don't sim right ter count on groanin' an' death-beds, do it now?"

She was frankly crying. He could see her poor, thin shoulders, the flesh he loved, rising and falling beneath her Paisley shawl. Tears from a cherished woman take two ways with a man. Elias chose the violent road.

"Two pound on Lady Day," he repeated, "or I sells you up, Mary Peskett. An' her as might ha' bin a prosperous man's wife, may die in the workus fer all I cares."

With one stride he was over the stile. Along the lane he went. Mary, dropping her apron from her eyes, saw his black head, his black and bushy beard, through the exquisite thinness of the unclothed trees.

II

It was Lady Day. Mary Peskett sat in the blacksmith's parlor. She awaited him. This was to be a crucial meeting. She spread wide her toil-worn hands, and looked on the absolute emptiness of her palms. Through the wall came the manly sounds of the smithy.

The blacksmith's was the usual ugly country parlor. Above the hearth was that picture which gave a theme to the room. It was a cheap German print of the crucifixion, and the picture that Mary had vowed she could never live with. Crude fancy had portrayed a

fleshy Christ. This subject, which in true hands has commanded the tears of the world for nearly two thousand years, was debased to grotesqueness. Mary tried not to look. But the brilliant blue garments worn by the women at the foot of the cross, the drops of crimson blood—these colored the walls.

Elias came in just as he was—all grimed from the forge. The simple woman noticed, with her eye for sickness, the deadness of his lips and the hollows, like finger marks, at his temples.

"Elias," she said, quiveringly—rising, half curtsying even, she was so in his power—"I ain't brung the two pund. I—I couldn't save he by no ways, my dear."

Very rarely had she called him by any tender name.

He sat down at the bureau. This ancient piece of furniture was a tribunal. It cried out with village history. Master Jaggs had wept beside it—easy tears of extreme age. The Widow Daborn had sat sideways on the chair near, trembling for her cherished bed of feathers. The blacksmith was a hard man, and those who borrowed of him had sold their birthright.

He was turning over his papers, taking them from the little pigeon-holes inside the bureau. With her maternal interest in him—a lover of twenty years—Mary noticed how his flat, shining face was on the work all the time and how, just as if a wire tweaked his muscles, he kept turning to look at that profane picture above the hearth.

"What time I wur nursin' I saved ivery penny I could, Elias. But theer ain't bin much sickness, nor yet many little babbies. I knowed theer wouldn't be no babbies, acause theer was hardly any catkins on the hazel bushes larst year."

Elias picked out his paper, and stuffed the others back. He patted it flat with his blackened hand—the mortgage deed on her cottage.

"Two pund down be due, Mary Peskett."

"I knows it be. An' I ain't saved more'n seven shillun."

"You paid nowt at Michaelmas, an' I let you off then. 'Tain't my rule ter give time."

"Time wun't be my healin'," she said, dolefully. "Ef I wur ter search the wide world from here ter Dunchester an' beyant, I'd niver see the chance o' two pund or one."

"I can take the roof from over your head."

"I knows it. Full well, I knows it."

She began to weep. The veins in his neck turned purple.

"It's clean tore the innards out o' me ter find this 'ere money twice a year. I've sold a'most ivery stick o' furniture—the oak chests an' the china figgers an' mother's little silver spoons thet she kep' wropped away in wash-leather, an' on'y brung out fer funerals an' christenin's. I offen feels as mother don't forgive me fer partin' wi' the spoons. Fer the dear Lord's sake, don't 'ee turn me out o' the little house, Elias. I'm jest like a cat fer lovin' places."

"Thet garden o' yourn—it'll cut up inter a nice row o' bay-fronted villas," he said, staring at her.

She arose, her face streaming.

"Then the ghosts o' feyther an' mother'll walk clean through the walls," she said, solemnly, and lifting her hand in valediction.

"You don't believe in sech?" asked the blacksmith, quickly.

Mary laughed—in the free, wild way of an outdoor creature.

"I marks 'un in the wood—frequent. But I bain't afeard o' sperrits, good or bad."

"An' the devil? Him what goes about like a roarin' lion?"

Elias, as he spoke, peered into the corners of the room, and mopped his face with his spotted handkerchief.

"Marster Jaggs see 'un at this very door." Mary pointed, eloquently. Her eye lighted. She was kin with the mysterious; woods had taught her this.

"But he don't niver come acrost the threshold," Elias told her, quickly.

"This parlor's my safe spot."

He turned round full to the picture, and flung up his haggard face.

"I sleeps here," he confessed. "I lays on the sofa, nights."

"Elias! You ain't yourself! Theer's fever in your eye. Now, cucumber pared thin be good fer thet, or a bag o' borage-blooms hung about the neck wares off fits."

"I'm well enough," he maintained, "so long as I keeps close by the picter. I dursn't bide at the forge long. He comes behind. He'll shove me inter the fire one o' these fine days."

"Elias! I wun't believe as him what coorted me has sold his soul."

She wiped her eyes, and tottered forward to comfort him.

He jumped back.

"You're arter the paper!" He whirled his hand behind him.

"No," she said, calmly, and falling away, "I truly warn't."

She realized, all at once, as baited things do, when worn enough, that the final moment is not so bad as the long dread of it. Let him take her cottage. She could sleep in the woods.

She turned away, instinct with dignity. She looked a queen, the bent and shabby little creature, as she opened the door and walked forth into the garden, her head held high in the spicy Spring-air.

Elias followed, the mortgage deed still in his hand. The borders were filled with flowers—yellow and white, bowing reverently on the long stalk. This was Lady Day. They were festive—honoring the Mother of God.

The door of the smithy stood open. Mary stepped in, her wild lover close at her heels. She turned and faced him.

"The sun outside makes your eyes sore," she said, quietly, "so I'm come in here for a larst word. You—you started coortin' me in here, Elias. I mind the day; chestnuts was in bloom, an' mother sends me down ter the forge wi' an old kettle ter be soddered, an' you—"

"I wur a young chap, then," he told her, vacantly. "When a man's growed he thinks on solemn things; on what comes arter this life."

She saw him shiver; and she told, by his gray, parched look, that she had lost him. He would never be a lover any more. She suffered a wrench. He had been a possession for twenty years. And now his spring of love lay broken.

He was gone. The change had come to him, which sometimes comes to middle-aged men with such startling suddenness. He was struck all along the side—of love.

Closed was the door of her deliverance. She had wrestled with herself coming along the road; she had half persuaded herself to marry him. It would be a trial—one of those nervous jerks that roughen life. She so cherished her clear, peaceful chastity. But she fancied, on careful weighing, that she loved the cottage more.

Elias spoke the very thought that was sluggishly forming in her distracted brain.

"How can a man think on a woman when he's fair eat up wi' dread o' the devil, Mary Peskett? Tell me thet."

She gazed across the smithy in terror; feeling the shocking gulf between them. Here, in touching distance, was one foredoomed to eternal flames. And he once had loved her!

She believed in a personal devil—that conviction so essential to the pious life. It wrung her to think that Elias—a lover, a husband even, had she so chosen—was quivering in the grip of the Terrible One.

"He wun't let me bide," confided the blacksmith, piteously. His eyes looked from a long way off, from such a forlorn distance. Truly Elias, the lover, had absolutely departed!

"He's like a cursed dog fer follerin' an' watchin'. He—he's grinnin' round the door now. Keep atween us, Mary Peskett!"

She glanced through the door. It merely made a frame for the devoutly smiling morning. Elias looked, too—and saw more than the morning. He screamed. He started to run.

"Let me goo back ter the picter. One sight o' the cross withers him."

"Elias! Elias Angel! Keep a good

heart, my dear. See! I made a cross to skeer 'un."

She seized two bits of rough iron that lay on the bench, crossed them, and piously held them high. Her face was rapt as, with throat and arms stretched upward, the bonnet slipped from her gray head, she raised the blessed emblem.

"In the name of Christ!" she said, in a soft, new voice.

This was a moment! Elias threatened, and she designed by God to snatch him from perdition. Likely this was why she had been born into the world. Very often she had racked her head for a reason.

"Look on it!" she cried, ecstatically. "The cross, Elias!"

But he had stumbled and heavily fallen, his head on the anvil. The last she saw of him was his tortured face and the sharp, black peak of his beard as he dropped.

How instantly, at the blacksmith's cry, the smithy filled with people! Mary remained—dazed. At her feet were the pieces of iron—no longer symbolic.

They all came tumbling and shouting in—Jane Wells, who cooked and cleaned for him; the apprentice; old Master Herbert Rapley, who had been Spring digging the vegetable patch; the doctor, who happened to be passing on his morning round.

She let them carry him away—she, who had the best, the only, right to touch him. They carried him away. She was neighborly with Death—and here greeted him. Elias was dead. As they carried away the bulky, nerveless body, suddenly grown strangely long, she wondered vaguely what had become of the best part of Elias Angel—the part which had been her true love.

As she stood, staring and cold, conscious most surely of a second presence, she saw on the floor the mortgage deed, just as Elias had dropped it. She picked it up, hating the very crisp touch, execrating the lettering which she could not read. She picked it up, she threw it on the embers and began to blow the fire.

The smithy was ruddy. The flames roared. The sweat ran down her face. Her mild blue eyes started with terror. She was afraid of fire. She would always be afraid for the rest of her life. But the paper! It was gone. To her ignorance, this paper represented everything. It was sole witness. No one could touch her cottage now.

It was gone. She knew perfectly well who had prompted her deed. She was not alone in the smithy. Shivering from head to foot, she approached the door and the innocent world. On the threshold, she looked back and tremblingly spoke—tears in her voice, and thick terror.

"You've no call ter bide about here," she said, stoutly, making a cross with her hands across her lean breast. "Elias be fetched away, pore chap!"

She sat in her cottage a week later. No one could turn her out of this sweet home place. She was sleek with absolute security. She might hoard her celibate state. The idea of mating had always done violence to her instincts.

"The on'y husband as iver I wanted wur the little house an' the bit o' land," she murmured, cherishing the white-washed walls.

She sat with her hands folded. How blessed was absolute idleness! On the fire there brewed a great pot of herbs. The steam came in a thin line through the tightly shut lid, and the room was pensively filled with Oriental fragrances.

She was free. She was at peace—almost. Yet the memory of the burned paper touched that delicate part of her which men call conscience. Now and again she shook her head—for her sins. More than once she shuddered—for her soul. The little spark of penitence was growing. It lighted a destroying fire in her bosom. A hard tear splashed on her shining knuckles. She looked furtively at the open door. Elias had always distrusted an open door—for the Thing or the dread Person who might peep round. She rapidly approached that insistent mood when sinners seek shriving.

There were feet on the cobbled path outside. She stumbled up. Through her lips there came a thin cry. Who stood without?

But the new-comer was only the doctor—rosy and clean-shaved, blown fresh with the robust March morning. These two knew each other very well.

"I carn't goo a-nursin', Dr Ambrose," she said, shaking and curtseying. "I ain't fit ter bide near the sick an' dyin'."

"You may retire from nursing, Mary Peskett. You are a woman of means. Elias Angel was buried on Friday and——"

"A Friday—sure!" she murmured, touching the wispy black neckerchief at her chin—all the mourning she had been able to find by rummaging in ancient family boxes.

"And he left a will, giving you every penny he had in the world."

Her jaw dropped, and her hands hung.

The doctor snuffed up the fragrance from the bubbling pot, and indulgently smiled.

"You won't be spoiling my business for me now, Mary Peskett."

She looked round the room, loving every inch of it, and aching for the bare places.

"Do you think, sir," she stammered at last, "thet Mrs. Morris Nix over by Penny Pot 'ud suffer me ter buy back them silver teaspoons? You're very good friends wi' Mrs. Morris Nix. Pore mother wur main set on them spoons, an' I'd pay the weight in goold, cheerful I would, fer thet dear soul ter lay quiet in her grave. We did order do all as we can fer the helpless dead."



THE MEN WHO LOSE

WHEN you've toasted all the captains who have sailed the Ship of Right,
And bowed before the laurel crown of them that won the fight,
Here then's another health I call—the vessel tempest-tossed—
Drink to the ships that went astray! Drink to the Men Who Lost!

Their name? Their name is legion—their names you never knew;
They would not rise again from shame to take the crown of you.
For what avails the homage of the teeming street and mart,
The statue in the market-place, when worms are at the heart?

A better song is in their ears than ever victor heard,
A higher praise is in their hearts than any gilded word;
They have learned the final lesson, though they learned it to their cost,
The men who lived and suffered, the men who loved and lost.

Through all the world they wander still, these outcasts at your gate;
They have done with all your customs, and they preach the word of hate;
Yet are we kin with you, and once at least our paths have crossed.
Then pledge us now—drink deep and long—stand up: The Men Who Lost!

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



TO err is human; to forgive—diplomatic.

THE MACHINATIONS OF MARCIA

By May Isabel Fisk

THAT Marcia Egerton was an uncommonly clever girl no one could deny—indeed, no one cared to, save, of course, those rare women who are always prone to undervalue, and, whenever feasible, entirely discountenance the charm of another. That Marcia herself was quite as well aware of her own powers as those who admired and looked up to her, cannot be denied, either. She was self-sufficient, she was self-reliant, and the constant recognition of her acumen had imparted to her bearing a certain—well, scarcely arrogance, but something akin, which lent a rather added attraction to her natural stateliness.

That "Marcia's wonderful firmness of character" held an element of dogged obstinacy, or that her calm, blond beauty ever had an appearance of—say, stodginess, I would be the last to suggest.

But that is neither here nor there; those who knew were those over whom she held dominion, and to them she was a species of religion.

In the family, Marcia was paramount; her sway had never been questioned, her behests always obeyed, since, a toddling infant, she had pointed a pudgy finger at anything her fancy dictated, and lisped, "I want." She reigned by right of will alone, and no queen exacted more humble obedience.

The visiting list was under her rigid supervision, and those whom she black-listed were forever wiped from the social horizon of the Egerton family, whether any of the other members desired it or not. From the purchase of a rug to the scanning of a trite but

ever recurrent tragedy of the plumber's bill, Marcia was consulted, and her dictum permitted of no appeal.

Of course there was Harold, lately returned from a college career, and he had many ideas of independence, but there was something about the resourceful calm of Marcia that struck him as almost uncanny, and in the end he, too, yielded to the yoke.

It was the time of year when the question of the Summer flitting had to be discussed. At least, the other members of the family discussed it, and when the time was ripe, Marcia stepped in with her "superior judgment," and settled the matter in the manner she chose. I am speaking of years past. Now, Marcia observed:

"You need not engage a room for me, papa. I shall remain at home with you."

"Wha—what!" exclaimed the family in chorus.

"No," continued Marcia, calmly, "I shall remain at home with papa. Some one ought to look after him. It seems very selfish of us all to go off and leave him alone. I cannot but feel that I am best fitted to make the sacrifice. I do it gladly."

The head of the house for whom she expressed such solicitude regarded her with a baleful glare. It is possible he saw disappearing—well, the usual things with which the town-bound man is wont to spend his otherwise lonely evenings while mourning the absence of his family. The younger brothers and sisters looked on in silent awe at this exemplification of daughterly devotion; the mother wiped a tear from the corner of her eye, quite overcome.

But the college fledgling, Harold, whistled loud and long his incredulity.

"Don't do that again, Harold; it rasps my nerves and I must reserve all my strength to withstand the heat in town this Summer," observed the exponent of self-abnegation.

"But—but," spluttered Papa Eger-ton, "you'll do nothing of the kind. I won't have you round—I mean it will be much too warm for you—I can't permit——"

Marcia transfixed him with her large blue eyes.

"I shall remain, papa," she said, gently. And all knew it was useless to agitate the question further.

Now, Marcia had decided that she was "getting on;" indeed, she felt the time was not far removed when she should have attained the "thankful age"—a point wherein almost everything in the masculine line proves acceptable. True, she had many admirers—there, that expresses it, perfectly—"admirers"—who looked up to her and worshiped her from afar, but none dreamed of asking such a superior being to share his ordinary lot. Preposterous!

The last time she had moved, graceful and self-possessed, up the aisle to the accompaniment of "tum, de-de-de, tum, tum, de-de-de," she knew she would never again attend another to the threshold of matrimony. She had been maid of honor twice, and bridesmaid four times. On this occasion she had been the subject of many little quips and jokes, anent the possibility of her being the next, etc. To all of these witticisms Marcia responded with a faint smile, but inwardly she raged. Something must be done, and done without delay.

She had read somewhere of a young woman who had remained in the city, one Summer, while the rest of her friends had mourned at manless resorts. This brilliant girl had arranged the back-yard as a veritable garden, stocked the refrigerator with cold refreshments and then proceeded to dispense hospitality to the most eligible men in town. It did not take many

evenings of hammock swinging in the back-yard under the pale light of the stars, or trips to the ice-box in the still dimmer illumination of the butler's pantry, for this enterprising young person to nail the most desirable *parti* in town. Why should not she, Marcia——?

As the last flutter of a vanishing handkerchief was lost in the distance, Marcia gave a sigh of relief and prepared for business.

She worked desperately hard all day, but by nightfall everything was arranged to her satisfaction. She had entirely closed the front of the house. Beneath the chestnut-tree in the back-yard she had placed a rustic table and settee. To a pendulous limb she roped one end of a hammock; the other was fastened securely to a fence. Four palms in their brass standards were filched from the drawing-room and placed advantageously. A nearby florist was hurriedly pressed into service, and transformed the stiff square of sod into riotous masses of color. The whole effect was extremely attractive.

Paterfamilias viewed the transformation with a disapproving frown.

"Humph!" was all he remarked.

"Why, papa, I thought you would be so pleased. Don't you truly like it?"

"Do you expect me to sit out here nights with you?"

Marcia bent over, and plucking a velvet-petaled pansy, regarded it thoughtfully before transferring it to her father's coat.

"Papa, dear," she said, softly, "I don't expect nor want you to make any sacrifice for me; I am staying in town to make you happy. Go ahead, just as though I wasn't here, and I—well, I'll manage. We may as well understand each other at the start."

Pater pursed his lips as though to whistle, apparently thought better of it, and slowly winked one eye and then the other.

"Don't, papa; how inexpressibly vulgar!"

"My girl," said the father, "you ain't so stupid as you look."

Marcia winced under the doubtful compliment, but said nothing.

"Well, I'm off," said *pater*. He paused at the kitchen door and regarded his offspring with a newly acquired admiration. "Marcia, you're all right—you're a chip of the old block. Don't sit up for me." Again he winked slowly and solemnly, and disappeared in the house.

In the growing dusk, Marcia swung in the hammock and commenced to map out her plan of campaign. First, she would—

Clear and high above the muffled din of the streets rang the notes of a violin. Silhouetted against the light in the second-story window of the next house, stood a man, playing. Presently he paused, and laying aside his instrument, looked out. His falling glance rested upon Marcia. Marcia returned the regard, though she grew very red. After a moment the man bent his head toward her and began to play something weird and romantic, in a minor key, that thrilled her through and through, and Marcia knew he was playing to her. It was very interesting and delightfully improper; at last, affrighted, she fled into the kitchen.

The next morning, at an early hour, Marcia was in the yard watering the flowers. She was very attractive in her immaculate white shirt-waist and piqué skirt, to which a tiny apron added a touch of coquetry. Marcia had decided that the simplest of gowning would be most appropriate for the rôle of a stay-at-home.

A soft thud, and at her feet a rose fell, its stem piercing a white sheet of paper. Marcia looked up. At the window of the next house stood, smiling, her serenader of the night before. In the light of day she observed that he was well built and good-looking in a swarthy, foreign fashion. But what most attracted her was the gay red-and-blue uniform with its shining array of brass buttons. If Marcia could have owned to a weakness of any sort it was her predilection for gold lace and brass buttons.

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She hesitated, and then, flushing, picked up the note.

FAIR UNKNOWN:

Will you give me the pleasure of your acquaintance? May I call this evening at eight?

Respectfully,
ROMAGNO.

Marcia threw a nod and a smile, and then, overcome by her boldness, hastened into the house.

Now, Marcia was not unlike others of phlegmatic temperament and limited imagination—once turn on the faucet of fancy and the stream becomes a devastating flood, impossible to shut off.

By nightfall Marcia had made up her mind they would live in Rome during the Winter. All the girls would be green with envy when they received her letters dated "Rome, So-and-so;" "Palazzo, So-and-so." That her unknown adorer was a man of title was attested by his note—on it was emblazoned a crown just above the initials, R. H. G. B. She remembered that foreigners of title were always well supplied with names.

Shortly after dark she answered a knock at the back gate and there he stood, uniform and all.

Of course, it was a bit awkward at first, but Romagno—he taught her to say it before the evening was over—was so very easy and offhand in his manner—so delightfully foreign—that her embarrassment soon wore off. It was all fascinating beyond anything she had experienced before.

Although communicative on all other subjects, her guest grew reserved when the conversation took a personal turn. Marcia surmised something mysteriously romantic—he was traveling incognito; but the brass buttons with his initials, R. H. G. B.—it was an odd conceit; she liked it—so delightfully foreign—betrayed him. She would learn all later.

About ten o'clock Marcia remembered the ice-box. It proved all and more than the girl Marcia had read about, claimed for it.

When they again came out into the

yard, Marcia said he must not do it again even though he were delightfully foreign. However, she was delighted to see with what gusto he made away with the dainty edibles and cold drinks she had so carefully prepared. He ate rather hastily and in somewhat different fashion from men she had been associated with, but that, too, was delightfully foreign. He seemed thoroughly familiar with her own language, and spoke with scarcely a trace of accent.

At the end of a week, Romagno avowed his love for her and Marcia had confessed hers in return for him. Would she fly with him? Now, *wasn't* that delightfully foreign? Any American would have asked, stupidly, "Will you marry me?" Would she fly with him?—well, rather!

Said Romagno: "We had better clear out some evening when the family is away, or better still, on your night off."

"Night off!" repeated Marcia, puzzled.

"Yes," said Romagno, "or on your Sunday afternoon, if you would rather."

Marcia had started up, her eyes ablaze with fury.

"Who do you think I am?"

"Come, come," said Romagno, "don't get huffy. You were so perky and had so much style about you, I thought all along you were the waitress or up-stairs girl, but I soon found out myself you were the cook by all these good salads and things you make. But it doesn't make a bit of difference

to me—cook or no cook—I am just as fond of you any way you put it, and——"

"Stop, stop!" shrieked Marcia; "go this minute!"

"What a little cat you are! I didn't mean anything——"

But Marcia had dashed into the house and up-stairs to her room.

Next morning Marcia lay on the shrouded sofa in the dim drawing-room. Her head was splitting and her eyes were swollen with weeping—she still sobbed intermittently. She heard steps descending the stoop of the next house. She crept to the window and raising the shade cautiously, peeped out. Had the shock of the night before affected her brain? Surely—no, she saw a number of men all in uniforms precisely like Romagno's, even to the buttons, and—yes, even to the initials, R. H. G. B. They all carried odd-shaped bundles wrapped in dark material. As one man turned, he displayed on the object he was carrying, the inscription, "Romagno's Hungarian Gipsy Band."

That same afternoon as Mrs. Egerton emerged from the dining-room of the Pine-Top Hotel, she was handed the following telegram:

City hot. Father unbearable. Expect me on evening train.

MARCIA.

"Well," remarked Mrs. Egerton, complacently, "I knew Marcia and her father would never get along alone together without me!"



HEARTS

THEY played at hearts on the ocean strand,

When the moon was shining bright;

He thought that the queen was in his hand,

She thought she played aright.

But Summer has gone, and they both have strayed

Away from the fickle wave.

He says 'twas only the deuce she played,

She says he played the knave!

C. S. FRIEDMAN.

PEDIGREES IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE

By Maurice Francis Egan

THERE seems to be growing in this country a belief that pedigrees have a value not suspected in the days of that aristocratic Virginian, George Washington, whose arms are responsible for the make-up of our flag—that flag which is supposed to represent only democratic tendencies. And so, I feel it my duty to make an inductive study of the pedigree—the pedigree in the United States—not with a view of settling anything—that would be unscientific—but merely to show how the matter of the pedigree stands in the eyes of the people who see even romance with one glowing and one practical eye. The King, in "Hamlet," says something like this.

In the first place, a family with a pedigree has in itself a germ of reverence which goes on constantly developing as the pedigree develops. Reverence, we are informed, is completely lacking in American life. Given the germ of a pedigree in any enterprising American family, and the result will be as surprising as the appearance of a mushroom-bed in a cellar of the right temperature where the spawn of the mushroom has been properly cultured. To be concrete, let me say that, in Maryland, a little Calvert goes a great way—just as a little Lafayette in the way of beds goes in Virginia, or a little *Mayflower* in the way of spinning-wheels in New England. There is a petrified pie still preserved at Springfield which gives glory to an otherwise commonplace family driven from Boston because it could not afford to subscribe to the Symphony concerts; the pie—pumpkin, of course—is said to have been left over from one of Mr.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's breakfasts. To return to my illustration: so great is the reverence developed by a little pedigree injected into a family, that a sixth cousin—he had emigrated to the Eastern Shore—of the first cousin of the first Maryland Calvert broke off all relations with his only brother because that brother would insist on retaining a complete set of Fanny Burney's works in his library in Baltimore. There is a passage in the "Memoirs" of this vivacious lady—who, having married a D'Arblay, ought to have understood the irreverence of it as applied to a Calvert—in which she quotes the first Lord Baltimore as saying, "I have been upon a little excoriation to see a ship lanced, and there's not a finer going vessel on the face of God's yearth—you've no idiom how well she sailed."

You can imagine the shock given to reverence by words like this, quoted by a woman who might, at least, have neutralized her effrontery by explaining the meaning of aphasia, which is an infirmity of only noble minds not brought up in the trammels of the dictionaries. It was sufficient; Eastern Shore will not speak to Baltimore until the accursed volumes are banished. If we lack reverence, let us cultivate more pedigrees. It is true that we are in a state of transition. Mistakes will occur, of course. "My husband," a woman of wealth, legitimately acquired in Texas oil wells, said recently, "visited the herald's office in London, and discovered that we are descended from a Knight of Malta!—it's so romantic!—here are the arms!" "Beautiful!" said one more advanced—her money had been earned

forty years earlier in Pennsylvania oil wells—"beautiful! But where is the bar sinister?" "I don't know," answered the first woman of fortune, in an aggrieved tone, "everything ought to be there. I am sure George paid enough for it!" "I shouldn't mind, dear," the second lady of fortune said; "anybody can have a bar sinister!"

This was unkind; but it shows that much advancement has been made in heraldic matters among persons of fortune since the Civil War. The second woman still bears the crest of the Bayards, she being, she says, descended from a Huguenot family of Louisiana. She might have chosen a better place for Huguenots, and she has forgotten that the gallant chevalier—*sans peur*, but not altogether *sans reproche*—had, as the cynical De Bacourt says in "Memoirs of a Diplomat," "the good sense never to marry," and also that a crest is not quite proper, no matter how well engraved, to be borne by a married woman. Still, she has advanced. Her sons will have the wisdom to choose another ancestor. Froissart is full of ancestors not yet preempted, and, although the title of Vidame de Chartres appears in the very first page of the "Memoirs of the Duc de Saint Simon" no American family has yet claimed it. The business of registering pedigrees may yet become so great that the Government will have to establish a bureau, when its utility becomes as apparent as I hope in the course of this paper to indicate. There is one great difficulty in the way of registration, the necessity of frequent changes, as people feel that an increase of wealth entitles them to longer pedigrees; no doubt, however, the Treasury could find room for these increasing fees. There is no use in telling me that an undirected choice of ancestors sometimes leads to disasters; I know it, yet difficulties of this kind might be avoided by the appointment, for the present, of a board of directors—men of erudition, as well as good taste—under the superintendence of the officials of the Library of Congress. I emphasize good taste

as necessary because of the mistake made by Mr. —, whose name I cannot give because he is well known in Chicago. Early in life he had been foolish enough, during his first trip abroad, to choose an eminently respectable cardinal, mentioned in Bae-deker, as one of his ancestors, not knowing that sort of thing went out with the Renaissance and that Duke of Valentinois, a cardinal, to whom Mr. William Waldorf Astor drew our attention in a novel, but did not claim as an ancestor. Mr. Blank, of Chicago, confidently tried to run for an important elective office in the stockyards district. When his ancestry was announced by an A. P. A. paper he did not poll ten votes in that district. Not that the voters in the stockyards have a prejudice against cardinals.

You will admit that this shows the folly of the undirected American youth's choosing its own ancestors. It shows likewise that persons who guide the choice of pedigrees should have good taste; and, decidedly, in the present condition of things, when so many illustrious ancestors are wandering about unclaimed, bars sinister and unnecessary reflections on decent cardinals and Knights of Malta may easily be avoided.

A most flagrant case of needless aspersions cast on persons of extraordinary propriety—in the sense of virtue; it is difficult to find a sufficiently chaste phrase to express what I mean—is that which readers of fiction may recall. I think it occurs in a work by an unusually serious-minded person, Kate Douglas Wiggin. As I remember, her heroine, Penelope, being in Scotland, thinks it expedient to choose Scottish ancestors, and she mentions John Knox and Meg Merilies. This is regrettable, coming as it does from a writer who seldom shows that light-mindedness which taints the works of so many modern factors of fiction. It is neither in good taste nor accurate. It is true that Meg Merilies was not conventional, but Sir Walter Scott never said a word against

her character; and, as to John Knox, though personally I should like to believe that he was capable of anything, there is no record that he and Miss Margaret Merrilies ever met. It is a great pity that Penelope—though we know that American girls when abroad lose their natural seriousness—should not have reflected that it is no light matter to take away the reputation of a minister of the Gospel. After all, it is not the man who suffers so much from these insinuations, and Knox's descendants, if there are any resembling him unhappily alive, can take care of his reputation; but who is to defend, to exonerate, to clear the reputation of Margaret Merrilies? She may have had her faults; but the careless world ought not to be induced to believe that she ever loved John Knox! Kate Douglas Wiggin's Penelope is but a type of these Americans who, in choosing ancestors, think too little of the pain they give to the thoughtful. The careless woman who once cast scorn on the time-honored practice of spiritism—known long before the managers of the Eleusinian mysteries discovered the telephone—by forcing an amiable "medium" to produce the ghost of Robinson Crusoe, belonged to this destructive class.

I once knew an elderly gentlewoman—she was Irish by descent—who had condescended to marry a Frenchman of the family of Saint Pierre. Her example has always struck me as one of a highly convincing kind. Her own genealogical tree flourished more greenly every year. It came to include in time Brutus, King Arthur, Brian Boru and Lady Edward Fitzgerald. She, however, made the mistake of having it carefully written out and illuminated; consequently, when, at a small dinner given in Washington by one of the most distinguished of the cave dwellers, she was obliged to give precedence to a relative of the Medina-Coeli, it almost broke her heart; but, as the Medina-Coeli, as we all know, are descended from King David, and consequently claim to be cousins, several times removed, to the Blessed Virgin, her religious princi-

ples forced her to go as far back as she could. There had been moments in her life when she had thanked heaven that her late husband, M. de Saint Pierre, had been "no real kin" to her, as our colored brethren phrase it; but she suddenly remembered that her husband's favorite saint had been Petronille, the only granddaughter known to history of St. Peter's wife's mother. There is a chapel to St. Petronille, much venerated by the French ambassadors at Rome; there is no record of the marriage of this saint, and the scion of the Medina-Coeli remarked this, when the proud gentlewoman demanded precedence as the descendant of "Saint Pierre, *qui avait fondé l'église catholique, vous comprenez?*" But, as Madame de Saint Pierre pointed out, there was no record of the marriage of King David. There was much argument—in Washington, and, later, in Rome, in fashionable circles—until an obliging chamberlain of the cloak and spade, who was also Irish, gave the triumphant Madame de Saint Pierre a fine place in a tribune at Saint Peter's at a great function as one of the nieces of the Pope—which Pope was not named; but it settled the lady's claims. The only point remaining to be defined—it was undecided at her death—was whether she should take secular or ecclesiastical precedence. The latter would have forced her to enter last. All this proves that in the adopting of ancestors, the victory is never to the timid.

Great harm may be done by relying on guides to genealogies who have only a defective knowledge of the Latin grammar. There was that most delightful Milwaukee family, the Geigenwils. It would be very bad form to mention the name, if these afflicted folk, all girls, had not changed it through hasty marriages with men whose genealogies have been improved by their wives' sad experience. It was Emma, the eldest daughter—she had taken the classical medal in one of these delightful finishing schools where there are no examinations—who was responsible for a mistake which cast a

gloom on a name until that time glamoured with the festive associations that could only cluster around the best brand of beer ever made in Milwaukee. She is now in seclusion in the Austrian Tyrol, looking up a quartering or two for her husband. Emma—then a sweet, bright, innocent girl, untouched by sorrow—discovered one day that the Geigenwilds were entitled to the prefix "von." "Von!" old Geigenwild said, heartlessly—he was then alive—"Von! Von tollar or von thousand tollar is more in my line; the tollar mark is good enough for Oonkle Fritz!" Emma found in the Milwaukee public library a delicious book of pedigrees. And, in parentheses, I would advise the scrupulous pedigree-hunter to avoid public libraries—old and remote tombstones are better. The book that Emma found contained the Bavarian pedigree of the von Geigenwild-Schönsteiners-Schoonermeeers. It included Charlemagne—no pedigree in the United States is complete without Charlemagne—Frederick Barbarossa, William Tell, Christine of Sweden, Catherine Bora, and Luther, of course, and the general of the Hessians who came over to wipe out George Washington at a "levy" a head, in 1776 or thereabouts. This last was the most precious of all, for it would have given Emma Geigenwild admission to the Society of Colonial Patricians, which is almost as much honored in Milwaukee as the Deutscher Club. The happy Emma discovered, under the date of July 6, 1773, next to the loveliest set of quarterings, with a goat rampant over a stein, emblazoned with hop flowers, or, the record of a Frederick von Geigenwild-Schönsteiner-Schoonermeeers, and, in brackets, *fuit*, with his age, sixteen. He fled—Emma translated "*fuit*" as "fled"—and, if he "fled," why not to America? The grateful girl at once presented her family with an ancestor who had fled with the Hessians, returned to his native country, accepted his ancestral honors, and became the grandfather of that dear papa who jocularly called himself your "Oonkle Fritz." Milwaukee

accepted the Geigenwilds and their pedigree until a hateful Chicago reporter, envious of the glory of a too powerful rival city, found Emma's lovely book in the public library, and announced that Frederick von Geigenwild-Schönsteiner-Schoonermeeers had "died," not "fled," at the age of sixteen. The matter was hushed up; but the five (von) Geigenwild girls had to change their name.

It would not be hard to relate many similar accidents in well-regulated families, happy in everything except the choice of ancestors; but, after one has arranged a pedigree—always leaving room at the top—the selection of family portraits is a very delicate matter. There was, or rather is, Celia Dimmesdale, not of the great New England Dimmesdale-Prynne clan, but of some unknown family. When she married John Smith, who had been at West Point, where they do not study art nor heraldry, she felt the need of family portraits. "They *do* dress up a room so," she often said. At an auction sale of one of the esteemed residents of the Back Bay, Boston, she picked up an exquisite Lady Hester Dimmesdale, who had, the auctioneer said, come over in the *Mayflower*. She wore a rather low gown; but the auctioneer declared, on the evidence of an old letter, that the picture was painted before she was converted by her second husband, the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale. Mrs. John Smith, née Dimmesdale—I copy the legend on her cards—had to arrange for the purchase of ten portraits to "lead up" to Lady Hester. Mrs. John Smith was the leading lady at several fashionable army posts until old Mrs. General Grundy pointed out, with the assistance of Brooch, the portrait-painter, that this picture was really a Nell Gwynn. Mrs. Smith was compelled to add a Charles II. to the collection, to throw out Cotton Mather, and to change the religious connections of nine out of ten of her ancestors. It was hard to give up the *Mayflower*; but, when the Smiths had been exiled on an Indian reservation for some years, the

affair was forgotten, and Mrs. Smith, who was of a frugal mind, had Cotton Mather painted over as the kindly Bénédictine monk who converted her ancestor, Charles II., to the true Faith at the eleventh hour. If it were not for the Virginians at the various army posts—and the Virginians have the eyes of lynx where pedigrees are concerned—Mrs. John Smith would have added her husband to the descendants of Pocahontas—but this may come. Then the Rolfes will make a row.

It was different with the Scrimpouls. When Baker Scrimpoul had bought up all the franchises left in Philadelphia, and the magazines printed his picture among the "looters" and "grafters" in that town of brotherly hate, he felt the necessity of a pedigree. He had married one of his daughters into the Assembly; but this was not enough. Somebody recommended old tombstones in Massachusetts, for Scrimpoul sounded like an old New England name. Scrimpoul bought up the undivided fourth of a graveyard at Salem, and managed to root out a Scrimpoul, who was burned as a witch in the same year as Mistress Hibbins, to whom she was related. After the pedigree had been done—the Scrimpouls had connected themselves, through Governor Bellingham, with Charlemagne, of course—it was made known that the buried Scrimpoul was not of the female sex at all, but an honest young African slave who had died of a fever at the age of thirteen. Certain genealogical "sharps" in Boston threw this—in a Sunday edition of the Philadelphia *North American*, I hear—into the face of "honest Tom Scrimpoul." The end is not yet.

There is nobody who believes more in the freedom of the press than the present writer, but the press should be restricted, in a constitutional way by an appeal to a higher law, when it comes to an interference with vested rights. Now, pedigrees, into which brains and money have been put, represent certain vested rights; and yet, we find sent out by respectable publishers, volumes of memoirs which

tend to check the spirit of reverence for the past and to invalidate claims that have laboriously acquired. To destroy a family tradition is to commit a social crime. George Washington was so well satisfied with his ancestors that he never had that feeling of "goneness" which affects so many American citizens, and especially citizenesses, who have only crayon presentments, or at best daguerreotypes, while their neighbors, who have been abroad, have hand-painted portraits of long ancestral lines. Charles Carroll, the signer, had merely to write his name to the Declaration to make an ancestor of himself. Benjamin Franklin was always a leveler, or he would have taken care that his descendants should have no difficulty with their escutcheon; but, after all, in his time, the French Revolution had made pedigrees unpopular. In our time it is different. "Madam," said a sad-faced tramp recently to a stern-looking Boston woman, "you may imagine how dark life has been to me, how few advantages I had in my childhood. Our family," he lowered his voice and looked about fearfully, "had *not one* ancestor in the *Mayflower*!" The good woman's eyes filled with unwonted tears.

Speaking of the licentiousness of the press, I may offer an example of the harm that may be done by reckless statements which, even if true, somebody ought to extirpate. Here are the "Letters of the last Colonel of the Irish Brigade." One would think that Irish pedigrees would be safe from the cynicism of printer's ink. They are so elusive. They are like Irish fairies. They go back as far. An Irish family can always drop an obnoxious ancestor, if it wants to. When one has a pedigree from that elder brother of Noah who had a boat of his own that was not a menagerie, one can afford to choose. For example, Mr. George Moore, the Irish Zola, has lately cut off his spiritual ancestor, St. Patrick, because the president of Maynooth Seminary received the King of England with honors; and it is rumored that Mr. William Butler Yeats, the intimate friend of the

leprechawns, is about to renounce the Anglican opinion because the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin refuses to believe in Queen Mab. Still, there are some Irish families who, with a fatal lack of foresight, have clung to their relationship to the brilliant Count O'Connell, the last Colonel of the Irish Brigade, and the great Daniel O'Connell. This means a pedigree of such Irish, Austrian and French splendor that the hated Saxon would go mad if he had to disentangle it. What, then, must be the feelings of several households in Wilmington, Del., Waterbury, Conn., and Memphis, Tenn., whose great-aunt was the third wife of Bartholomew O'Connell, who was the great-uncle of the liberator, and therefore the uncle of Count Daniel Charles O'Connell, to read in these "letters" that the O'Connell pedigree cost £300! and that M. Chérin, the famous genealogist of the Court of Versailles in the reign of Louis XVI. took four years in inventing—I mean in "synthesizing" it! Can anything be more painful? There are even questions raised about the coat of arms. Books of this sort should be kept in locked cases, for the young of our time, even the females, are not sufficiently inclined toward that reverential state of mind which is the very basis of ancestral solidarity.

The ancestral Trusts—I speak, of course, respectfully of the Sons and Daughters of the Revolution and the Colonial Dames, etc.—have so cornered the market that it is difficult to catch a forebear of the required American antiquity. So hard is it now to secure a forefather who lived through the glorious days of seventy-six that there are some who even cast envious and covetous eyes at Benedict Arnold—which accounts for the great circulation of books devoted to the rehabilitation of that interesting person. Benedict Arnold, by judicious manipulation, may be converted in time into a sufficiently good "collateral"—for "collaterals" are the very life of our societies devoted to the worship of ancestors. Without the "collateral" arrangement many honest citizens would

be compelled to gnash their teeth in outer social darkness. I do not mean to offer an excuse for the Dubuque man who tried to attend a fête given by the "Daughters" in Continental uniform because his great-uncle was the son of a nephew by marriage of that Miss Shippen who became Mrs. Benedict Arnold. To say the least, the Dubuque man was immoderate. Still, there is a way out. The assimilation of the Philippines has opened new avenues for those unfortunates who have acquired no commercial position here, to purchase trolley lines in those happy islands. They offer space for congested speculation. Has it occurred to nobody that the societies of the South American Revolution give numerous chances for the enterprising? In almost any South American country you can get up a revolution for a song, and the ingenious mind can easily secure the prestige of one of their risings, and a button more gorgeous than anything yet dreamed of in the conclaves of our own patriotic assemblies.

It is to be regretted that the English do not value our pedigrees as they ought. They assume to think that everybody is delighted to be equal to everybody else here, just because the influence of Rousseau got into the Declaration and made it give that impression. The English have given so little thought to their own ancestors—who have come naturally—that they do not appreciate what wear and tear are forced on us by the acquiring of even one distinguished person for the beginning of a line. Besides, a coat of arms is becoming absolutely necessary to every American. The indignity of going into dinner behind heraldic bearings is felt by us, while an Englishman is quite satisfied to go in behind those that possess them without desiring them himself.

As an instance of the density of our kin across the sea in these matters, so vital to us, let me quote a few words from the Dowager Lady S—y, addressed to her future daughter-in-law. Lady S—y is the mother of the fetching young peer who brought over

the Gaiety troupe in '97, and whose breach of promise suit—Pettie Primrose, of the Empire ballet, was the lady—led to his second bankruptcy. Lady S——y writes:

MY DEAR LOVE:

I am so much obliged for your genealogical charts, and it is a great pleasure to see the copies of the various coats of arms of your mother's family. The colors are certainly very pretty, and our late dear queen had *nothing* like them. I can't make out whether your mother's name was Jinkins or Tinkins—but, you know, it doesn't make much difference, because we think it is so *nice* for you all to be *equal* on your side; and I'm sure that the persons who went over in the *Mayflower* were quite honest tradespeople, with nothing against them, except that they were dissenters of some sort. It's kind of you to tell me about them, but I should never have held it against you. In these days of agricultural depression, we don't object to our sons marrying American girls when they're pretty and not out of women's colleges—we can't stand that—and rich; and Wellesdale, poor boy, says you're very presentable and vastly more entertaining than that awful acting person who mis-

understood him so dreadfully. Colonials, you know—Australians and New Zealanders—and that sort of persons, are out of the question, and Canadians are never rich enough, besides they imitate us, and have classes, but you don't, you know—you're all alive, and the daughter of a blacksmith or that sort of thing is just the same to us as the daughter of a great family, like the Tinkins or Jinkins—I hope I have the name quite right. I am, by the way, having my maid wrap up the silver-gilt nutcrackers which I am sending you for the wedding. Tell your dear mother that the diamond tiara will no doubt become you vastly. I have asked Wellesdale to thank your grandfather Tinkins for it. With best love!

You can do nothing with such persons as the Dowager Lady S——y, who, I have heard, really handed over the reprints of the Jinkinses' coats of arms to her maid, to make a frieze for that important woman's sitting-room! Enough has been said, I fancy, to show that some means must be found for supplying our fellow-citizens with pedigrees and forcing aliens to respect them!



AFTER ALL

IF all the love with which woman has loved
 Were melted and molded together,
 And all the faith she has spent on its wraith
 Were woven, a star-spun tether,
 If her fruitless tears and her anxious years
 Were a molten cup to hold it,
 Could the vast sea's rim, or horizon's brim,
 Or the universe wide enfold it?

If all the courage and all the pain
 With which man for ages has loved her,
 Has hoped and striven, endured, forgiven,
 Repented and tried and proved her,
 The war of his life and its hidden strife
 Were illumined for mortals' learning,
 Could Time enroll, or the sky be a scroll,
 Or the earth a pyre for its burning?

Yet we quip and we question whenever we can
 Old life, with its doubts and its lures;
 While woman is woman and man is man
 So long as the world endures.

VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD.

A STUDY

SHE'S full of tact—she knows just what
 To say, and when to say it;
 Whatever part falls to her lot,
 She's well equipped to play it.
 Your smiles are mirrored on her face,
 Your sighs are heard, and heeded;
 And tears—the tears that leave no trace—
 Are promptly yours, when needed.

She has soft looks for Tom and Dick,
 Likewise for scapegrace Harry;
 Were she confronted with Old Nick,
 Methinks she'd mildly tarry
 To say a word of soothing praise—
 And e'en that stern saint, Peter,
 Could scarce escape her wiling ways
 If he, by chance, should meet her!

Her mind's alert your thought to grasp
 Practical, or esthetic;
 Her hand is ready with a clasp,
 Tenderly sympathetic;
 She's full of tact—in word and act
 Well doth such grace become her;
 But, she's so full of tact, in fact—
 That—all the men fly from her!

MADLINE BRIDGES.



APPARENT

FARMER—This place of mine is only five minutes' walk from the station.
 SUMMER BOARDER—Then all I can say is that I must have got off at the
 wrong station.



A RUSSIAN NEWSPAPER

CONTRIBUTORS to this paper must sign their names to their contributions,
 as an evidence of good faith, but not for publication, unless we happen to
 be getting out a supplement.

A WAITING RACE

By Martha McCulloch-Williams

RODNEY stopped in the shadow of a honey locust, and leaned upon the pasture wall to watch as pretty a colt race as ever he had seen. He was new to the grass country, English, of the race of Younger Sons, spareish, but well-knit, deeply tanned as to countenance, with a pair of sleepy blue eyes that yet held hints of waking. His passion for walking, with saddled horses always at command, amazed and amused his host, Allen Lewis, the bachelor master of Greenwold. Lewis was master also of the Roxton racing-stable—it was thus he had come to know Blanton—Blanton, of New York, whose letter had been Rodney's open sesame to grass-country hospitality.

Greenwold was so big the pasture at the farther edge of it lay a mile from the house. The rising sun had drawn water; therefore the day was sweltering hot even thus early. Dew lay still in the deeps of the grass, although the cropped turf was dry and springy.

Rodney took off his hat and wiped a very wet forehead, then set a hand edgewise above his eyes the better to see the young racers. There were five—two sorrel fillies, a black colt, a gray and a bay, their course the pasture's round, perhaps a quarter of a mile. At the start the sorrels led, but before they came to the half, the bay shot to the front with the gray well lapped, and the black, as in the beginning, an open last. Yet he ran so well within himself, showed such strength and power, Rodney shook a fist at him, saying: "You rogue! for shame, to let yourself lag behind these others! You're built for a bulldog of the

course. Wonder if you lack grit? If you don't, I lay odds you'll make a king-pin of distance horses—if only these hustling Americans give you time to come to yourself."

"That's what I tell Allen, but oh, you ought to see Isis!" somebody said behind him.

Rodney turned, as though shot, to see a woman in a linen habit, trim but faded, slip from saddle, tie up her reins and turn her horse to grass in the lush meadow.

"Simon Peter loves to race, if he is ten years old. He'd go over the wall in spite of me if I didn't let him get at forbidden grass. He has run—and won—in good company, a heap of times," she said; then, holding out her hand: "Mr. Rodney, I'm Elizabeth Wheat; you are to dine with us Sunday at Wheatstones, you know. Do you love to watch a colt race? I like it best of all. So I come out whenever I hear them running—this pasture is so near I hear them very plain. Father has no colts—he deals only in saddle stock. I don't know what I should do if Greenwold were not so handy, and Allen so kind."

Rodney stammered something—he hardly knew what. Albeit he had made love under many skies, women had been so far mere incidents, more or less poignant, in his phases of existence. Yet this woman, tall, slight almost to angularity, of a roseate, red-lipped pallor, with hazel eyes full of shifting green lights, had suddenly, unaccountably, set his heart beating like a trip-hammer. She showed race as much as any thoroughbred in the pasture, but it was nothing

physical, neither beauty nor the lack of it that made him tremble. A fine, subtle essence of the soul, the spirit had leaped from her eyes to his. Yet he did not wish to touch even so much as her hand. When a loosened tendril of her silky hair blew almost against his cheek he leaned away from it, pretending to reach upward for a fierce and hoary locust thorn.

"The colts all know me; Allen lets me name them, but he won't let me pet them—says it makes them wicked," Elizabeth remarked, after a minute. "He is chock full of old superstitions, you see. I ought also to believe in them—his mother raised me—almost. Until she died two years ago I stayed at Greenwold a heap more than half the time. Mama—my stepmother—cares for nothing but clothes and cooking. She can't understand anybody—any woman body, that is—ever caring for other things. So I'm not much in the house, even now, when I'm at home most of the time. Father is satisfied if I come to dinner and prayers at night. You have not seen him. He's a dear, but—I wonder," a little wistfully, "if you will promise me something?"

"Ask me," Rodney said, looking over her head.

"It—it's nothing—much—yet it may mean a lot," Elizabeth said, hesitatingly. "I can't well tell you the reason for asking—but please say nothing to father, Sunday, about Isis—"

"Isis! The big black mare that looks so sleepy?" Rodney interrupted.

Elizabeth nodded, saying: "Yes—but she wakes up—sometimes. Things happen then—if she is uglier than homemade sin, and crankier than a ram's horn. She's full sister to the black colt you like so, and both of them Isonomy's grandchildren. As Isonomy's granddaughter, I'm sure you would hate to spoil her chance of running dark in the Fairlawn."

"Wouldn't do it for a kingdom!" Rodney protested, suppressing a whistle. "But really, Miss Wheat, I couldn't do it if I would. I have only

seen the beast in stall—Lewis has not shown me his string at work."

"Oh," Elizabeth said, with an accent of distress, "then I ought not to have said anything. Please forget what I said."

"If you will tell me something else," Rodney bargained.

Elizabeth's answer was an inquiring look.

"Can Isis win the Fairlawn? Will she do it?" he ran on.

Elizabeth frowned faintly, saying, with her head up. "Isis can win—she can run over the moon, and come again, if she chooses. But the three times she was out last year she didn't choose. Besides her Isonomy blood, she's kin to the best of all our great, old-time four-milers—Ten Broek, Lexington, Vandal, Lady Rell, ever so many more. Mix all that up with the best legs and the longest reach in the blue grass, and see what it makes."

"You know a lot about horses," Rodney said.

Elizabeth smiled, saying: "Why shouldn't I? I love them so much; besides, there is not much else one can learn about here—except men."

"Men! What do you know of them?" Rodney echoed, laughing.

Elizabeth shrugged faintly. "A heap of things," she said. "Father has them around in shoals—to breakfast, dinner, supper, so I can't help but know how they eat—and make love—and put their consciences quite in their pockets when they trade horses—father as much as any of them; yet in other ways he's the honestest man—and mighty truthful."

Rodney chuckled. "I see I must be very wary of you, Miss Wheat," he said. "About Isis, though—are you going to back her? What odds will you offer?"

Elizabeth shook her head. "I won't bet with you," she answered. "We blue-grass folk are like Arabs, in that we bear a conscience against spoiling the stranger within our gates. Besides, I'm tired of winning trash—gloves, candy and flowers—and people

would be horrified if I won anything else. But this Fairlawn I shall bet money—real money—Allen has promised to put it up for me; no matter about the odds."

"You had better make me your commissioner—you'd find me awfully discreet," Rodney said, with a twinkle. "Moderate, too—in consideration of your tip."

"The tip is a good one—just now, let me give you another. Go to the house, quick! Or, better, come home with me. Don't you hear the thunder? It will be pouring in a mighty little while," Elizabeth said, looking anxiously toward the southwest where a wall of purple-black cloud was rising rapidly. In places it was lurid, in other places veined with lightning streaks. It seemed to rest upon another wall—of silver-sheeted rain. Elizabeth, scrambling to saddle, pointed along the way she had come, then called to Rodney: "Follow me!" He did follow, although he did not in the least mind a wetting. He found all Wheatstones's gates open, Major Wheat himself leaning anxiously out from the piazza to drag him to shelter, and set him in the midst of the half-dozen men already gathered there.

The major was spare, red-faced and somewhat hawk-eyed, with yet a curious trace of likeness to his daughter. He kept Rodney to dinner, to supper, and wanted to send him home in state, upon his own best saddle animal with a groom riding back of him, but to that Rodney would not agree. He chose instead to walk back—with his head in the clouds, dreaming of Elizabeth—Elizabeth whom he had not seen again save at table, although the major had done his best to persuade his daughter to go to the piano and let the stranger hear her in "The Maiden's Prayer."

The night was enchanting—moonlit, full of fresh, earthy scents, and soft, ruffling airs. Lewis sat on the steps of Greenwold piazza, and shouted joyously as he sighted Rodney.

"How did you get away? I thought

sure the major'd keep you, at least until to-morrow evening."

"You knew I was at Wheatstones?" Rodney asked.

Lewis chuckled. "You don't know niggers—that's plain," he said. "They know whatever goes on, on any plantation within ten miles of 'em. Don't ask me how—all I am sure of is that they do know everybody's secrets—and a lot more besides."

"That must be inconvenient—when you're training a dark horse," Rodney said, banteringly. "You have, I believe, all black people about your stable—?"

"Whom money won't buy. It's been tried—more than once," Lewis interrupted; "at least, as regards stable doings. My boys know I trust them entirely. So far, they've been true to the trust."

"That's lucky," Rodney returned, lighting the pipe Lewis had pushed toward him.

For a minute there was silence; then Lewis said, a little hesitatingly: "I heard also about Elizabeth—how she met you—and all that. So I had better tell you why she is so free here. I'm going to marry her some day. I don't want you to think her forward—"

"Oh, I say! You want to make me out a cad!" Rodney protested. "I only think she is delightfully out of the common."

"She does spoil your taste for other girls. I found that out by trying to court another one. The other girl was prettier, too—heap prettier," Lewis said, chuckling; "but she showed me something else—that I was in love with Elizabeth—before I'd fooled myself saying the little Wheat child was just like my sister. I reckon you wonder why I don't marry her right off. Lord knows I'd like to—so much it makes me cussing mad to know I can't. You see, the case stands this way—the major is a thoroughbred, of the old sort—my father was another—too old to change his ways in anything. Open house, people coming and going, trafficking, trading, are the breath of life

to him. He believes all the time he's right on the edge of making a fortune, when really he is spending and losing one instead. Cleary won't let him see it—won't let me nor anybody show him the truth—Jap Cleary, who owns the bank in town and I don't know what-all besides. The major is wrapped up in him—tells him everything, and believes every word he says. He's low-bred, but mighty anxious to be accepted as a gentleman, and crazy to marry Elizabeth. So he's letting the major have money—as much as Wheatstones is worth—laughs over balances on the wrong side, and tells the old man to go ahead—he has got the bank behind him. By-and-bye, when he has got his clutch on everything, he thinks Elizabeth will marry him—to save her father from being turned out of house and home. He knows that would kill the major. I know it, too. I also know it would not bother the old gentleman the least bit to owe all the place is worth—so long as his creditor didn't bother him. Until I'm ready to be his creditor I can't ask him for his daughter."

"I see. This Cleary would turn rusty if he knew—" Rodney began.

Lewis laughed grimly. "Mighty rusty," he said. "Cleary suspects I'm in his way, but he knows I won't go in debt; also that a place like this takes a lot of keeping up, not to name the cost of breeding stock on fashionable lines. So he thinks his money holds me safe. I'll never come in for a windfall. I'm hoping to show him his mistake—before a month is out. If I do it—well, you must stay on for the wedding. You won't have to wait long."

"You mean you are going to win the Fairlawn with Isis?" Rodney said, turning his face from the tell-tale moonshine.

Lewis nodded. "Perhaps," he said. "But she's so uncertain, I'm really banking on the Ruby."

"Let me see them at work, please! You may trust me, if I haven't got a black skin," Rodney said, getting up and yawning.

Lewis also rose. "I would have

asked you out long ago," he said, "if it had not seemed a shame to wake a man before it was fairly dawn."

Rodney got up in time—possibly because he did not sleep all night. Elizabeth's voice haunted him, Elizabeth's eyes laughed at him through the Summer dark. One minute he told himself he must go straight away—the next he had found a hundred reasons for staying. Elizabeth was the sum and root of them all—he was still sane enough to understand that. He ended by a compromise with himself—he would stay until the Fairlawn had been run, then go, saying no word, making no sign. Elizabeth belonged to another, a better man. Even if she did not, it would matter nothing to him. Marriage was out of the question unless he married money. Elizabeth would bring to her husband only her sweet self.

Rodney kept faith with himself—at least as to words. But his eyes told Elizabeth many, many things. They met casually almost every day. If they touched hands Elizabeth flushed faintly, and Rodney looked away. Intuitively he knew she understood. So, knowing, he began to wonder if she really loved Lewis, or if she had not mistaken for love the affection of use and wont. Experience had made him something of a cynic, yet never once did he let himself think that Elizabeth had possibly been tempted by Lewis's possessions.

Elizabeth did understand. The appeal of passion unspoken touched her the more nearly that Lewis's love-making had been in a degree commonplace, despite its glamouring secrecy. She had known ever since she was in short frocks that she would be likely to marry him, and although she loved him dearly, he was not the least bit her ideal lover.

What wonder that her mind was full of Rodney, upon a morning when she rode out very early, with a rose in her breast, a song on her lips! She was sure she should find him in wait on the turnpike, but only long shadows filled the white road. She galloped

down it a mile, then turned into a narrow track running up the creekside. There she rode so slowly that Simon Peter's hoofs made no sound on the soft, black earth. After a while the track bent sharply. Turning the elbow of it Elizabeth ran upon Cleary, deep in converse with Dan Dycus, one of Lewis's stablemen.

That meant treachery on the face of it. Elizabeth turned to ride back and warn Allen, but Simon Peter whinnied joyously to Cleary's horse. Cleary turned as though shot, scowling ferociously. The negro leaped the fence at the other side of the road and ran away. Elizabeth made to send Simon Peter after him, but Cleary caught her reins, and said, his face purple, his eyes narrowed to slits: "You don't get away so easy, young lady! I've found out a heap of things this morning, but there's one more I want to know."

"Indeed!" Elizabeth said, her eyes blazing. "Let go my reins, please! There is nothing in the world I can tell you."

"Yes, there is!" Cleary roared. "You can tell me you'll marry me! You—you deceitful thing! I'm ashamed of myself—to want you as I do. But I mean to have you! Hear that? Don't you fool yourself thinking Al Lewis will win the Fairlawn, and a pot of money. I'll beat him, sure. And unless you take me, it'll be worse for—a heap of people."

"Let go my bridle!" Elizabeth persisted, tugging hard at the reins.

Cleary held fast. Between them the reins were drawn so short that Simon Peter felt the curb, and reared a little, half throwing Elizabeth against Cleary's breast. Instantly he flung an arm about her; as quickly she swung her whip and welted him full in the face. Cleary gave a savage grunt but held her fast, saying, as he tried to turn her face to his:

"My way is to give a kiss for a blow."

"Not this time," Rodney said, wrenching Cleary out of saddle and slamming him hard on the ground. Cleary looked up to see the Englishman standing over him with doubled

fists. As he lurched to his feet Rodney said, thickly: "Want any more? If you don't, get out—quick!"

Cleary did not speak; with a sort of wild-beast snarl he mounted and galloped away. Rodney turned to Elizabeth. "I ought to have killed him," he said. "It would have been a good thing all round."

"Take care! He—he will try to kill you," Elizabeth answered, going dead white.

Rodney laid his cheek against her hand, and almost whispered: "Should you care—much?" Then, as he felt the hand tremble, he ran on: "See what comes of being too virtuous! I walked out this morning instead of riding—because of my conscience—if I had had no conscience, we should have been riding another way."

"You followed Dan?" Elizabeth said, interrogatively.

Rodney nodded. "I saw him skulking—a stable skulker means stable harm," he said. "But the black beggar has not plotted to harm the Ruby—I heard nearly all that was said. This Cleary is really the clumsiest thing out when it comes to a racing conspiracy. Dan gave away—well, secrets, readily enough—except about Isis; to have mentioned her chances would have been a slur to his own idol, the Ruby. Cleary wanted him to do the Ruby some harm—just what, I couldn't gather. It was fine to hear the black fellow spit on his suggestion; so I think we had better not tell Allen—everything. The Ruby might go off a lot through missing his regular rubber, and I've a notion the Ruby is the real thing this time. The Star-Ruby blood is sweeping all before it. But we may be sure of one thing—Cleary will see to it that whoever wins over him must risk the chance of losing as much."

"Yes?" Elizabeth said, looking away. "Good-bye until Fairlawn Day. I am going away—for a week."

With the last word she tried to release her hand. Rodney kissed it and let it go, saying, "Good-bye—sweetheart," the last word under his breath.

II

THE Fairlawn, properly the Fairlawn Vase, was a distance race, three miles and a furlong, open to three-year-olds and upward, carrying weight for age. Among grass-country fixtures it was *the* classic, its beginning shrouded in misty traditions, with yet enough authentic history to make winning it a turfman's crown; this, notwithstanding the stake was none so rich, and the Vase itself only a plain and very ugly silver jug, which must be won three years running before the winner could lawfully keep it. Nobody had thus far won it three times, so every year the old jug, newly furnished, was filled with gold-pieces and set up to be run for. The running was always a battle royal between nearly the best in training. Millionaires even did not disdain to send back famous grass-country exiles, at great cost and charges, solely for the glory of it. So whoever won it needed luck no less than a good horse. It was nearly always a mighty open race—so open there were long odds in the betting.

This year it was different. Lewis gnashed his teeth to find that the Ruby, officially Royal Ruby, opened at even money and soon went to odds on. He was even more disquieted to find that there was an eleventh-hour contender for the prize in Petronel, one of the blue-grass exiles, the pride of an Eastern stable, whose owner, it was whispered, had been plunging disastrously ever since the season opened. Petronel was four years old, the Ruby three. There was Isis, to be sure, but Isis was an unreckonable quantity. If she would run as she could—Lewis let himself get no farther. He had backed her reasonably as became owner's pride, with very long odds, but his hope was really the rangy, slashing blood-bay whose coat vied with his name-jewel in splendor. Isis had no looks at all—she was big and lumbering, between brown and black, rusty as to coat even in perfect fettle, with a low head, and a way of holding it as though oppressed by the weight

of maledictions from the bettors whose money she had burned up.

Lewis had looked at her three times in stall, then slipped into his innermost pocket the gold-piece Elizabeth had bidden him lay on the mare's chances. He knew the coin—it was his mother's last gift to his betrothed. If Isis won, Elizabeth should profit as though he had made the bet. But the chance of her winning seemed scant and slight as he watched the parade—each of the ten other starters seemed likelier to go the route, if not to stay the distance.

He feared only three as against the Ruby—Minuet, California-bred, trained by a turf wizard, and rated the king-pin among racing four-year-olds; Petronel, the returned exile, and Sandown, a three-year-old, son to Persimmon, English in all but the fact that he had been foaled on American soil. Minuet was a rangy, long-striding sorrel; Petronel a bay as red as the Ruby. Sandown showed a white star and a white hind foot to set off his rich brown coat. In the ruck there were blacks, bays, a sorrel or so, and a dingy gray, good horses all, but hardly Vase winners unless by the merest luck.

The biggest of all Fairlawn crowds thronged the course and watched the parade. Lewis's pair came last—with the crowd rising at the Ruby and clapping ironically for Isis.

The start was a furlong up-course. Elizabeth, at the lawn-rail with Rodney beside her, kept her eyes glued to the glass. Isis had drawn the outside, the Ruby the rail; thus when the ragged line broke, to a belated "They're off!" there was a fleck of Roxton cream and scarlet at either end. The line straightened a bit as it bore down on the stand. There it was like a file of cavalry. The Ruby's chin was pulled into his breast; so was Sandown's. Minuet ran high-headed and freely; Petronel had batted ears, ready to savage whatever he might; Isis plodded, and the ruck pranced and danced. At the half she had fallen back half a length. The light-weighted division had gone to the

front, as though fully persuaded they could make it a runaway race in spite of the distance.

Lewis stood in the infield a little way from the finish-line. He did not dream Cleary was his elbow-neighbor until he heard a man upon Cleary's other side say, guardedly: "Remember! Fifty thousand! Not a cent less!" and Cleary's answer: "Hush! Don't talk here! The race ain't over. Time enough for money to talk when you've won it."

Lewis did not turn his head—he had no need. He knew the other voice for that of Petronel's trainer. Cleary, then, was behind the horse's appearance in the Fairlawn. Rodney had told Lewis only enough of his morning encounter to put him on his guard; still, Lewis had suspected strongly that Cleary knew how the land lay. Now he was certain of it—certain also that Cleary had plotted his ruin. Quietly, cautiously he edged back through the crowd until he was out of eye-shot by the pair. He felt singularly calm, although his muscles hardened, stiffened, until he seemed to himself to be made of steel.

As the race swept past the second time, the ruck still led it, but Isis, the despised, had surprising company. She ran bunched with Minuet, Petronel and the Ruby. Sandown was half a length ahead, and going easily. Rodney whistled softly. "A waiting race," he said in Elizabeth's ear.

Elizabeth did not answer—she was too rapt in watching for words. At the half in this second round, Petronel and Minuet flashed ahead of everything. The ruck began tailing—Sandown was, for a breath, swallowed up in it but ran gamely out, hanging at the flanks of the leaders. The Ruby was level with him, and still under wraps. Isis ran at the Ruby's saddle skirts, neither gaining nor losing through the next quarter. In the homestretch she lagged until daylight showed between her and the first flight. But there were no groans for her as she swept past—there was still a mile to go. When the racers came again, for that long last

time, who could tell what might be leading?

On, on, still on, a whirlwind of hoofs, of calls, of shouted encouragement, accented now and again by the cruel whistle of catgut, the flying horses swept over the dun ribbon of earth. The ruck jockeys pulled up at the half—Sandown also was clearly out of it, though still running gamely. At the next quarter Minuet shut up like a jack-knife. The wise men, the very wise men, groaned to see it. Petronel and the Ruby ran like a team in front, both in fighting tempers, their riders watching each other like gladiators in mortal combat. At the eighth they were still running head and head, fighting it out five lengths before Isis, undoubtedly victors in the race. Isis had run so far untouched of whip or spur, her rider doing no more than keep her straight. He was black, weakened, wiry, with a voice like a flute. High and shrill he shouted as he gave Isis three savage slashes and sent his spurs in deep. "Now you g'wan home! Go—fer Miss 'Lizabef!"

The watchers saw, as they heard him, a long dark blur with a rainbow streak above it, stream forward, stretching, straining, leaping, gathering, thrusting at distance as a giant might thrust his lance—saw it lock the leaders, run level between them, and keep on, on, a demon red head, with flaring nostrils, bursting eyeball keeping pace on either side. Thus three abreast, neither an inch to the bad, the good, they swept to the finish.

Lewis watched them with blazing eyes, almost forgetful of Cleary's neighborhood, until he heard a mumbled, bellowing shout, and saw, apparently in answer to it, Petronel carom violently against Isis, knocking her out of stride and trying to savage. It seemed she must foul the Ruby—muddle the issue of the race. But no!—with a wild, plunging scramble she caught her feet, stretched, went down almost flat, came up with a long, leaping bound, stretched again, greyhound fashion, and thrust her nose under the wire, even with the Ruby.

Bedlam broke loose then—oaths, shouts, cries. Lewis wheeled upon Cleary. "You will buy Petronel at fifty thousand—even though he lost the Vase," he said; "otherwise I will prove that—your jockey rode to orders."

"I don't care what you do—or try," Cleary said, angrily; then, with a taunting laugh: "You've lost more than you've won—that English fellow has got Elizabeth Wheat——"

Lewis gripped him before he could say more. Half-strangled, Cleary drew a knife, and thrust with all his might at his captor's breast. The knife went slashing until its point struck something hard. Before Cleary could turn it, a dozen men had dragged him away from Lewis. He tried to laugh again as breath came back, but cowered and fell silent after a look around. He saw that even his rescuers despised him.

Everybody felt that the crowd was wrought to the verge of tragedy. Like the wise men they were, the judges agreed upon a miracle—nothing short of a miracle could have made them see the Ruby's nose even an eyelash in

front. As the boards went up accordingly, cheer followed cheer, exultant, full of heart, withal touched with savagery. It was "Roxton! Roxton! Roxton first and second! Hurrah for Roxton! Hurrah-h-h for Lewis!! Hurrah-h-h!! Hurrah-h-h-h!! Hurrah-h-h-h!!!"

Lewis heard them with tears he recked not raining over a face white as death. Elizabeth amazed him as she wiped them away—a strangely adorable Elizabeth, who had somehow come to him through the thick of the throng. He smiled down at her shyly as he took a gold-piece from his pocket, and pointed to a dent in the middle of it, saying: "This is what saved me. Are you glad I kept it?"

Elizabeth answered only with her eyes—illuminated eyes that told Rodney many things. She had loved his love, but not as she loved and would always love Lewis's very self. He went up to them and took their hands, saying with an odd, diffident smile: "Mind you have the wedding over quickly, even though I can't stay for it—I have just got news that calls me away."



WERE JOY TO COME

WERE Joy to come, and say, so tenderly,
"Dear friend, I have a little hour for thee,
And thou, I know, hast long had need for me,"

The whole of life would thrill in that brief space,
The past forgotten, though its cold, dead face
Might catch a glamour from this later grace.

And I should say, "O Joy, thy feet were slow;
I put my hand in thine, and whither go
I know not, nor, rejoicing, care to know."

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH WELLS.



BRIGGS—How is Spangler's credit?
GRIGGS—First rate. He owes everybody.

THE HUSBAND'S PART

By James H. Metcalfe

“A LITTLE more paste here, Andrews.”

The maid brought the ivory box, removed the gold lid, and lightly touched a point of red to the nail of a finger on the hand her mistress held out to her. Then a little powder, and the ivory-and-gold brush in a moment left the nail as softly shining and flushing as a June dawn.

All of the things on the dressing-table were ivory and gold. And they harmonized ravishingly with the woman to whom they ministered, for she, too, was ivory and gold—a face clear and white as new ivory, hair gold untainted by alloy. Her gown of heavy silk was like old ivory, and it was embroidered with gold.

“Surely, I am very fair.”

Mrs. Trent stared at the beautiful face the mirror of her dressing-table framed, and nodded with triumphant conviction. There was, indeed, no doubt that she spoke truly. Her searching gaze studied every detail of the picture—the eyes, blue, lustrous, deepened by the long, sweeping lashes, the perfect curve of the brows beneath the bronze pyramid of her hair, the delicate lines of the nose, the scarlet glory of the mouth, the vivid white of the rounded flesh. Each detail was flawless, and she nodded again.

“Yes, I am very fair—an angel,” he called me last night—and as pure,” he said.”

As she recalled the praise, her eyes deepened and brightened, an added flush mantled her cheek, and her lips curved happily.

“But am I?”

Now the smile passed, the luster faded from her gaze, her brows straightened.

“I wonder if I am really a good woman? Would a good woman be tempted, as I am tempted, by her own heart, if her heart were pure? And I am so tempted! No, no, I am not good, not good. My love is a sin—I should send him away. I ought never to see him again; but—oh, I cannot!”

A maid entered the dressing-room, carrying two clusters of roses, one red, the other white.

“With Mr. Mannering’s compliments,” she said, as she laid the white blossoms the nearer to her mistress.

There was no need of explanation for the others. Mr. Trent always ordered red roses for his wife.

“You may go now,” Mrs. Trent said to the servant, who lingered; “I won’t put on the flowers until the carriage is ready.”

The lady had ten minutes for solitary reflection, and she intended giving it to the roses—which should she wear, red roses, or white?

She was startled by the irony of fate, which, while she was examining her morals, sent her white roses from the man she loved, red roses from her husband. And red roses were symbols of passion, and white roses were symbols of purity! It was as if fate jested with her and her husband, that it should let him send her such signs of eager love—for he did not love her, nor she him—while it allowed her lover to offer her the white emblems of purity, though

his whole desire cried out to her that she should abandon purity, and her heart echoed all his words.

She looked again in the mirror, without vanity, curiously. Could anyone detect in her face the evil war of passions within her? No, surely. Her face was cold, reserved—save when she thought of Mannering, and at least she could retain its ordinary expression as a mask when they met before others.

"My face is as hypocritical as the rest of me," she thought, with bitter self-contempt.

Then, being a woman, she suddenly strangled her emotions, lest she should cry, and thus dim the beauty of her eyes. She could restrain her feelings for the sake of her appearance, but she could not dominate her emotions for the sake of her soul, which shows that she was essentially human and very feminine. And so, being both human and feminine, she was not altogether just, despite her pride in the possession of that virtue, for she condemned herself utterly, when there was much to excuse her folly of the heart.

She had married at twenty a man who, ten years her senior, had already exhausted life. The fresh beauty of his bride held him hardly through the solitude *à deux* of the honeymoon. Afterward, he lost all interest in her. She completed his establishment, and beyond that he cared nothing save that she must remain high above any suspicion. His selfishness commanded her immaculateness. To the extent of her reputation she was a vital part of him; beyond that she was nothing. He treated her with deference outwardly; he never spoke to her but with entire courtesy, and his bearing toward her was without fault. He displayed always in her presence the same gentle graces of conduct that he would have offered to any woman—the house-keeper, for instance—and no more.

Of the real being within his polished shell, his wife knew practically nothing. There was only one exception—she knew that his egotism was swift to take alarm at any exceptional interest on her part displayed toward another man.

He was quick to jealousy, and keen to discover any hint of heart-wandering on her part. Twice she had provoked him in this direction, though she was in each case quite innocent in fact. Now, after four years of marriage, however, love had at last come into her life.

For two years she had cherished a bread-and-butter adoration of her husband. It had beaten out its life against the wall of his irresponsiveness. For a year and a half she had gone about heart-hungry, wondering, despairing. Now, for six months, she had known the alternate heaven and hell of a great passion. In justice let it be understood that she had fought against this love with her best strength, but it had been too strong for her. At last she had confessed the truth to herself—worse, she had confessed it to the man himself.

Under the circumstances, this result was not to be wondered at. They had met at the seaside through common friends. Her husband was often absent, and a natural enjoyment of each other's society brought Mrs. Trent and Mannering often together. He was quite without close ties; she was worse. They were sympathetic, lonely. He was a handsome, thoughtful man, hardly older than she. Naturally, they had grown to love each other before either suspected the danger. When, at last, they discovered the truth, it was too late. Mannering, who was by no means a typical breaker of hearts, lost his head completely, and begged her to run off with him. She repudiated this wicked suggestion with tenderness and scorn equally balanced. But his urgency left her with despair in her bosom, for imagination constantly whispered of the joy of life always with him.

Then some officious friend called Trent's attention to the intimacy between his wife and Mannering. Trent very coldly and elegantly insulted his informant, then set himself to watch. It took him little time to discover the mutual infatuation of the lovers. He learned, however, nothing culpable beyond a sighing passion. None the

less, he was in a white rage that his wife should have imperiled her reputation. This folly on her part touched him deeply in his chief attribute, his pride. He called her to him, and with exquisite bearing and polished speech, though not less bluntly, he bade her never again allow Mannering to enter their doors. Then, to make safety beyond possibility of cavil, he took her back to town.

Mrs. Trent obeyed his command, literally. Mannering did not once visit her in her own home, but she saw him almost daily, here and there, as opportunity gave, at luncheon, tea, dinner, ball and soirée. And this condition fed briskly the fuel on the altar of love.

II

THE maid came to announce the carriage. Mrs. Trent picked up the white blossoms. She had made her choice. They were the symbols of purity; it was fitting that she should wear such to meet her lover—he would be at the Harneds' that night. She remembered he had talked rather wildly yesterday, had been imperious, impassioned, and, as his words seemed to draw her against her will, it was as well that tonight she should be entrenched behind these bulwarks of purity. At the first glance he would see them, and they would indicate clearly to him the fact that he must not try to win her from her duty.

And, too, it was pleasant to wear them because he had sent them. Righteousness and inclination marched side by side.

The fact that this esoteric power of the roses must be thwarted by the lover's armor of love never once occurred to Mrs. Trent. She failed to take into consideration the fallacy in her logic which might have been discovered from the correlation of his sending white roses and his interpretation of them. She had arrived at her decision, and was content in it.

In the hall, her husband complimented her on her appearance, with

precisely the amount of emotion he gave to his praise of the grooming of the horses when they passed out to the carriage. He noticed that she did not wear his roses, and had a suspicion as to the source of those he saw at her corsage, but he said nothing. Only, he determined that he must be more than ever watchful. If she deliberately deceived him in any way, she must be restrained at once. If restraint were without avail, she must go from him. He must not be compromised. He sighed as he leaned back in the carriage. Nothing and no one could be trusted. It was most annoying. Then, with quiet zest, he began retailing to the beautiful woman by his side the latest gossip of the clubs.

It had begun to rain softly—a miserable night. Mrs. Trent snuggled within the recesses of her opera-cloak, and loathed the brilliant inanity of her husband's chatter. The horror of having to listen to a history of Wadsworth's latest drunken witticism when one's destiny was at stake! The ghastly irony of telling Ponsonby's exploits at polo to one who was confronting heaven and hell—and could not distinguish between them!

The patter of the rain was almost welcome. Its dreariness was harmonious with the melancholy of her thoughts, and its gentle sound was a complement to her husband's speech, to which she could listen rather than to his words. The fancy came to her that the drops blown glistening against the carriage window were the very tears of heaven shed for the sake of her despair. But, after all, their sympathy was too violent a product of her own strained imagination to soothe her dreary mood. They only served to aid her in a desolate oscillation between intense self-pity when she forgot her husband's voice, and crisp detestation of him when her ear harkened to his phrases.

Her only ray of light in all the darkness of her mourning was the pale blur of the white roses at her breast. She had chosen righteousness. But this satisfaction of conscience was, alas!

such a feeble thing when her heart cried out wildly for its desire.

Duty is as cold as justice, on which it is built, but love is a flame that may light the world, or, turned back on the breast whence it springs, consume its source and leave only the ashes of life. This thought was in Mrs. Trent's mind as the carriage stopped. She gave a sigh of relief that they had arrived. These fancies were torture.

It was not long after her arrival at the reception when Mannerling came to Mrs. Trent and made his formal greeting. The others in her group moved on, and the two were, for the moment, alone.

"I must talk with you, to-night," he insisted, "I must. You will not refuse?" His tone was peremptory, impassioned.

At his words, her heart leaped, half in joy, half in fear.

"Not yet," she answered, hesitatingly. "*He* is staying only a moment. After he has gone, then, why—" Her voice trailed into a shamed silence. She dropped her eyes from the man's eager face to the white roses—she needed their reminder that she had chosen the better course. Just now her weakness made her wonder whether, after all, she would have the strength to resist his pleading, when her own heart must echo his every prayer. She turned eagerly to an acquaintance who approached—any distraction was an aid to goodness.

III

It was an hour later when Mannerling led Mrs. Trent into an alcove in the hall, beyond the library door. Here, there was room for two, and they were safe enough from any interruption by the crowd that came and went in the hall.

Mannerling wasted no time.

"I have everything arranged," he said. "We shall take the train to Gosport to-morrow night at eleven o'clock. I shall have my automobile waiting in the next street south of yours at ten-

thirty, to take you to the station. At Gosport we shall go directly on board my yacht. Your husband will get a divorce; I shall marry you. By the time we return, the scandal will be dead."

The woman had been listening eagerly, her heart shaking, her eyes shining. She had forgotten the white roses. She felt herself swept onward by the fierce current of his masterful purpose. Her glance rested gladly on the firm face, with its aureole of vital force, on the compact frame, graceful, charged with energy. And her heart echoed every word, as she had known it would, and cried out to her that she must yield—every word, save one, her heart echoed as he spoke, and that one was "scandal."

At that fatal word, so hideous to a woman, her drowsing conscience revived, and she dropped her eyes on the roses she wore. She had chosen righteousness!

His eyes followed hers, and his features softened from the harshness of command.

"My roses," he whispered. "And you wear them on your heart, as you shall wear me, always."

But that ugly word still sounded in her ears, and fortified her resolve.

"No," she said, deliberately, "I shall not elope with you. You know I love you, but I have decided. My duty is here with him. He is not cruel in any way to excuse such a sin on my part."

"He does not love you!"

"I cannot justly reproach him for that. Neither do I love him. I cannot help it, any more than I can help loving you. But I can help running away. And so—and so—I shall stay, and break my heart!"

Her voice was a sob.

The man made no pleas; he merely spoke with intense conviction.

"You must—you will—go with me. I shall expect you to-morrow night, as I have said. Don't be later than a quarter to eleven."

"I will not go."

"And I say you shall!" The note

of the man who loves and dominates was in his voice. But now it changed utterly, as he whispered: "Oh, how I love you!"

With that vocal caress thrilling her, she moved back into the crowd on his arm.

"Will your husband come back for you?" Mannering asked, as they passed toward the drawing-room.

"I don't expect him," Mrs. Trent answered, "and I shall go at once."

Mannering had secured his hat and coat, and was waiting to put her in her carriage when she reappeared.

"I, too, am leaving," he explained, with a smile. "My hansom is just behind your brougham. Appearances do not matter now. There is no time for scandal before to-morrow night."

Again that word! Mrs. Trent shuddered as they stepped out into the night, and her resolve, which had weakened at the sight of him as she came down the stair, now strengthened again. Certainly, she would not go. Did not her roses prove the purity of her purpose? Ah, she had forgotten to tell him the significance of the flowers! A pity it was now too late!

The night had grown colder; a fall of sleet had been followed by a heavy, fog-like mist. Again Mrs. Trent shuddered, this time with physical, not moral, dislike of her environment. Quite unbidden, a picture rose against the blackness of the night, a picture of a yacht gliding smoothly over starlit waters, and, on the deck, two persons, quite alone, side by side, very close together, a man and a woman. She could see the man's face distinctly—a strong, eager, wholesome face. The woman's face she would not see.

In justice to her husband, Mrs. Trent shut the eye of her imagination, banished the seductive vision, and hurried down the steps. From the shelter of the carriage she reached out her hand to Mannering, and said, rather coldly:

"Good night."

"Good night," he answered, confidently, "and au revoir until to-morrow night."

"No," she declared, firmly.

"Until to-morrow night," he repeated, steadfastly; and the carriage rolled away.

In the solitude of the brougham, the woman experienced the fallacious joys of the martyr. Her conscience rejoiced in her refusal of the happiness offered her, but all the rest of her nature revolted with a vigor that set her moaning.

One thing her mind realized in this crisis of her emotions—that she must give up the deadly delight of Mannering's companionship. Without it life could mean little, but she was awake at last to the danger she ran. His domination of her was so delicious she could not venture to pit her feeble strength against its charm. Her sense of justice grew larger, and she perceived what had hitherto been hidden, that her duty to her husband forbade her to run such risks against his honor. A little gasping sob marked her determination never to see Mannering again, at least, not in tête-à-tête. And then the stars in their courses warred against her.

As the carriage rounded a corner, there was a violent jolt, then another, and another—at last a full stop. Mrs. Trent uttered a sharp cry of fear, but, before she had time to repeat it, the carriage door was opened hastily, and in the light of a street lamp she recognized the features of Mannering, who stood uncovered before her.

"Don't be frightened," he said, "it is——"

"I am not." "Now," she might have added, if prudence had not silenced honesty. "But do, please, put on your hat. You will catch cold."

In her tone was all the woman's concern for the man she loves. Mannering hastened to obey.

"One of the horses is down," he explained. "I was just behind you. Wait a moment, and I will see how things are."

He went away, and she forgot, in her joy at his presence, that she had sworn this joy for all time to come. And she was still athrob with wonder.

ful happiness—just because the one man in the world for her was close at hand in this moment of mild disaster—when Mannering returned.

"That off horse is down again—he's an unbalanced brute, anyhow—always stumbling. But the street is like ice to-night; I oughtn't to blame him, I suppose—especially as it gives me a chance to be of use to you. Wait just a moment again."

He disappeared, and Mrs. Trent remained quite uninquisitive, still athrill with that wonderful delight. And this time conscience did not rebuke her. How could it, when the matter was none of her making?

It was ten minutes, perhaps, before Mannering came back to her. Meantime, she sat listening vaguely to the sounds of activity just in front of her. It did not matter that the horse had fallen. Usually she would have been alive with sympathy for the creature, alarmed lest he were bruised, for she was a sensitive and kindly woman, gentle toward all things. But to-night her interest was in nothing except him. She had before her a vision of his face, and it filled all her horizon. Among the noise of all who had gathered around the fallen horse, she heard only his voice, as it sounded from time to time in crisp commands. Her only active thought of it was as to the contrast it would have presented to her husband's cold drawl had he been present. Mannering's voice was typical of the man, alert, yet orderly; masterful, yet with a captivating sweetness. She started with delight when it sounded again at the carriage window.

"I'm afraid he's lamed himself too badly to be driven, or, at least, a walk will be his limit. I'll send you on in a hansom. Better, you take mine."

Without more ado, he opened the door, and helped her out of the brougham and into the hansom, which at his gesture had drawn alongside.

But before the window of the cab was lowered, she leaned forward and thrust the roses into his unwilling hands.

"He sent me red roses—I wore yours instead. If yours had been red and his white, I should still have worn the white. They mean the right, you know—that is why I wore them. I will not see you again—not to-morrow—"

The window slammed, the driver cracked his whip, the cab rolled away, leaving Mannering alone in the street, in his hand a cluster of white roses.

IV

TRENT, finding himself bored at the gathering to which he had betaken himself, decided to return to the Harneds' and escort his wife home. That this would hardly gratify her he could not doubt, but, despite that important fact, it would be a very proper thing to do, a most courteous and considerate act, and Trent's courtesy, especially toward himself, was unailing. He was, then, greatly chagrined when he found that he had arrived five minutes too late to carry out his plan of politeness. Unfortunately, there was no help for it, so the disappointed husband accepted a cab, and was driven rapidly homeward.

It was with something of a shock that, on reaching the house, he learned that Mrs. Trent had not yet arrived. He was seriously disturbed, and with reason. When one's wife has started for home before one's self, by the same route, but fails to reach her destination after a proper lapse of time, there is room for alarm—especially if one be of a suspicious turn of mind—and Trent was excessively suspicious.

He canvassed all the possibilities, and, as the time passed, settled on morbid certainty. At the end of ten minutes he no longer retained a doubt. Evidently his wife was the victim of an accident, or he was the victim of a design. At any rate, he must know the truth.

He went into the wide hall, where, to the servant whom he bade hold his coat for him, he mentioned casually

that he had an appointment at the club, and ordered a hansom. When it reached the door, he allowed the servant to give the club as the destination, but no sooner had the corner of the street been passed than he pushed his stick through the trap, and directed the driver to hurry to Mannering's chambers.

The mental working by which he arrived at this course of conduct was simplicity itself. He was jealous, without loving, than which no jealousy is more ignoble. Full of suspicions, which facts had, to a certain extent, justified, he was keenly eager to know the worst, if worst there was. And here, certainly, there was ample ground for harrowing apprehensions! If he should find Mannering in, the evidence of his guilt would be almost conclusive, since he undoubtedly left the Harneds' at the same time as did Mrs. Trent.

And yet, there was the matter of the coachman and footman. She would hardly dare drive in her own brougham with two of the Argus-eyed on the box, straight up to Mannering's bachelor apartment, and enter there, while the carriage waited. Still, servants might be bribed. Trent, who had no self-respect, in spite of his egotism, and therefore respected no one else, was not at all sure of the probity of his servants, or their devotion to himself. Or his wife might at that instant be driving about the streets with Mannering, in the isolation of the brougham—cozy enough, for all the nasty weather.

Well, he would soon know, or be able to guess. He had an excuse for his call on Mannering, and, in any event, there would be no scandal. If the worst were true, he would nevertheless comport himself with that distinguished courtesy which was his crown of virtue.

It would be too much to say that Trent was not at all disturbed, for he was most seriously agitated in the centre of his being—his egotism. But that same egotism left him quite undismayed as to his conduct, for one

who possesses tremendous egotism, and no self-respect, can never be at a loss. And, too, of course, a sufficient pride in one's manner will easily carry the possessor through the most trying ordeal.

On reaching Mannering's chambers, Trent received another shock.

"Is Mr. Mannering in?" he asked of the man who answered his ring.

"Yes, sir."

And in those uncompromising words Trent received the shock. He had anticipated lies, evasions, doubts, hesitations, and he had received only a downright "Yes, sir." It would seem, then, that, after all, he had been mistaken in his surmises. It was something of a trial to the man's egotism to acknowledge that his judgment had been at fault. Happily, his safety as a husband would console him, ultimately. Meantime, he must see Mannering, though he detested the prospect, and explain the occasion of his visit.

"Ask Mr. Mannering if he will see Mr. Trent."

The servant went away, and returned promptly with the assurance that Mr. Mannering would be very pleased. A minute later, the two men stood face to face.

"So glad to have found you in," Trent asserted. "It's a little political idea of mine. You know Broderick so well I thought you might use your influence, you know, and get him to write a pamphlet on the financial question. His name would carry it, and it would do a lot of good."

"Why, yes, I think I could persuade him," Mannering answered, with much enthusiasm. Indeed, Trent was astonished by the other's eagerness.

He did not guess that this fervor owed its origin to a reaction from a very natural alarm that had been provoked by his man's announcement that his midnight visitor was the husband of the woman with whom he intended to elope within twenty-four hours.

"Yes," Mannering continued, "I believe he'll do it. And it's a capital idea of yours, capital."

Trent appreciated the compliment at its full value—and more. Mannering was not ordinarily very cordial toward him; his egotism received the sop with gluttonous joy. He was beaming as he stood up to say good night. He had forgotten his suspicions.

At that moment, his eyes fell on the table that stood in the middle of the room. A sickening wave of amazement swept over him. For there, in full sight, shamelessly brazen, lay a cluster of white roses—he could have sworn to them—his wife's.

Trent left the house blindly—he could never afterward remember what he said, or the order of his going. His whole emotion was one of despair amid the ruins of his pride. She, his wife, had been there, in that very room, had just left it, might still be in hiding within sound of his voice. It did not matter; wherever she might be, the past was irrevocable. His honor was foully, hopelessly stained by her, his wife. He went away courteously, but despair gripped him. His pride was seared—he to be the mock of his fellows, the cuckold of a faithless wife!

V

STILL the possessor of that delicate courtesy which gilded him, Trent knocked at his wife's door, and awaited her permission before entering.

In this time of upheaval, he still retained the details of politeness, and thereby demonstrated its entire worthlessness when based on egotism rather than on altruism. For his first words were venomous:

"Why do you return to my house, madame?"

His wife only stared at him in undisguised amazement, whereat Trent's indignation broke forth.

"I was at the Harneds'—after you left," with evident sarcasm.

"Well?"

Her restraint angered him almost beyond endurance. It is sometimes difficult to reconcile the emotions of

an injured husband to the exigencies of the pink of politeness. However, Trent held himself within those bounds of patience required by perfect manners, and only permitted that candor which was necessary.

"I understand the reason of your delay in returning home. I know all."

"Oh, James told you. I hope the horse is not seriously hurt?"

"The horse!"

"I thought you said you knew. One of the horses fell. I came home in a hansom."

"And Mannering?"

"Yes, he was just behind. He gave me his hansom."

Mr. Trent was in a wild rage now. The story of the accident might be true, but that did not matter. Perhaps it had only chanced to offer the opportunity she craved. But since he knew her perfidy, this air of insolent disdain maddened him.

"Where are your flowers?" he cried, roughly.

"My flowers!"

She could not speak another word. There was a long silence. The man was gasping for words. At last—

"Leave my house within twenty-four hours."

"What! You mean—?" Her air of indignation was superb. "You—you—believe—?"

"Oh, I saw your flowers in Mannering's chambers—where you left them!" the husband sneered. "You will leave my house within twenty-four hours—I do not care for repentance."

And he went out of the room.

His wife stood staring. Then she shuddered. It was so fearful to her, a woman, to be so foully accused. She stood long in an anguish of shame. And then at last the injustice of the accusation rose like a giant to overthrow all her scruples.

"I thought it would not be fair to him," she murmured. "And now—fair to him!"

Her eyes fell on the red roses that were in a vase on her dressing-table—red roses that whispered softly of love

and delight, red roses that he, her husband, had given her—and their message was a siren song that wooed her thoughts from duty toward a dream of bliss.

"I shall not be later than a quarter

of eleven," she said, aloud, and very earnestly.

This story is not in extenuation of erring wives—only a warning to erring husbands.



BRER ADAM

OH, I'se sorry fo' Brer Adam,
I'se as sorry as kin be,
Kase he neber had no mammy
Fo' toe rock him on her knee.

Den he neber had no chilehood
Roun' de happy cabin do',
Wif his mammy dere toe cotch him
Ef he tumbled toe de flo'.

An' he neber knowed de feelin'
When de sun had sunk toe res',
An' de possum an' de hoe-cake
He had tucked beneaf his ves'.

Jes' toe snuggle up toe mammy
While de shaky embers glowed,
An' she sof'ly tried toe p'int him
Up de straight an' narrer road.

Oh, it mus' be mighty sudden
Jes' toe staht a growed-up man,
Wif no t'ings toe reccolmember
Dat would len' a helpin' han'!

An' I sometimes git toe t'inkin'
He'd 'a' let dat apple be,
Ef he'd eber had a mammy
Fo' toe rock him on her knee.

ELAINE McLANDBURGH WILSON.



A VERDICT POSTPONED

PAYNE—Tell me what you eat and I'll tell you what you are.

LANE—I'll tell you some other time; I had pork for dinner to-day.

ARCHERY

WITH golf become a weary round,
 Our caddies out on strike,
 And tennis—after golfing—found
 Too tame and dull to like,
 We let the links to dairymen,
 Played in our courts a last time,
 And took up archery again
 As the one perfect pastime.

Its scoffers will at least admit
 'Tis not an aimless game!
 (I think I hear some huntsman wit)
 Retort with "gameless aim!")
 But, anyhow, *we* had an end
 In view—and I bet Sophy
 A man, and not a maid, would bend
 The bow that won the trophy.

She took me up—and lost. I, too!
 But somehow didn't mind.
 An honorary member who
 (Tradition says) is blind,
 With mighty skill made needless quite
 All rivalry between us—
 'Twas that renowned toxophilite,
 D. Cupid, son of Venus.

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



IT WOULD ANSWER

ROSE—I painted this picture to keep the wolf from the door.
 FLEMING—If the wolf is anything of an art critic it will do it.



JUST THE SAME

COBWIGGER—Do you keep up your college studies during vacation time?
 VAN SPRINTER—Oh, yes; four hours' track and road work every day.

TOUJOURS DEMOISELLE

Par Charles Foley

C'ÉTAIT un soir d'été, à Lucerne, après une représentation de *Paul et Virginie*. Violette Merval venait d'être acclamée pour sa beauté, sa grâce et sa voix délicate. Je connaissais la cantatrice. Aussi l'attendis-je à la sortie du théâtre afin de lui exprimer mon admiration.

Sous les arbres de la promenade, devant le lac où la lune, aux frissons de l'onde, se reflétait en brisures d'argent Violette m'apparut encore toute mignonne et jolie dans l'envolée de ses mousselines vaporeuses et de ses soies légères. Cependant un peu de pâleur et de mélancolie lui prêtait cette sorte de charme attendrissant qu'ont les femmes et les fleurs fanées avant l'automne pour s'être épanouies en trop vive lumière. Mais ses yeux demeuraient d'un bleu profond de candeur, d'espoir et d'illusion. Elle me prit le bras et, sortant du groupe des artistes qui l'entouraient, elle m'entraîna jusqu'au lac. Là, coupant court aux compliments, elle murmura dans son sourire exquis :

— Ainsi, vous me trouvez toujours jeune, ingénue, virginale... Croiriez-vous, cependant, que je vais avoir trente ans !

— Est-ce possible ?

Le sourire s'atténua en petite moue de regret :

— Hé oui ! Voici douze ans que je suis jeune, ingénue, virginale... Aussi bien à la ville qu'au théâtre ! Car vous n'ignorez pas que Violette Merval est toujours une demoiselle parfaitement comme il faut, une vraie petite vertu ?

La question m'embarrassait. J'y répondis sottement :

— Etant donnés la familiarité et l'intimité forcées des répétitions, la camaraderie obligatoire en tournée, puis aussi la griserie des ovations, l'emballement des rôles de passion d'abord feinte puis sincère, rien n'est plus méritoire que d'être restée honnête dans une telle existence et dans un tel milieu !

— Aussi suis-je estimée et respectée, fit-elle. Ce n'est pas désagréable. Mais je me demande parfois s'il ne serait pas encore plus agréable d'être aimée.

— Hé ! mais... les occasions n'ont pas dû vous manquer ! Si vous êtes restée une *petite vertu*, selon votre expression, ce ne peut guère être que par orgueil ou par dédain.

— Eh bien ! non, fit-elle vivement et naïvement ; je vous assure, si étonnant que ce soit, qu'il n'y a pas de ma faute ! J'avais la vocation du mariage, j'adorais les enfants. Seulement ma vie ne s'est pas orientée de ce côté-là. Tenez ! nous avons le temps, je ne me sens pas lasse et la nuit est de sérénité féerique : tout en nous promenant, voulez-vous que je vous conte ma vie ?

J'acceptai volontiers. Et, le groupe des artistes nous suivant toujours à distance, Violette, que le clair de lune sans doute invitait aux confidences, commença d'une voix douce et voilée :

— Orpheline, je fus élevée par une tante très pauvre. J'avais déjà la mine innocente et la voix jolie. "Quelle ravissante petite ingénue cela ferait !" disait-on à ma tante. Et ma tante le crut. Cette phrase-là décida de mon destin. L'excellente femme liquida sa modeste pension pour m'habiller coquettement et me payer des leçons de maintien, de danse, de chant et de diction. Je la

suppliai vainement de m'élever modestement, économiquement; elle ne voulut rien entendre: "Laisse-moi faire. Je veux mettre tes talents en lumière. Qu'importe que je m'y ruine! Quand tu seras une Adelina Patti, tu me revaudras ma dépense au centuple!" C'était une idée fixe. En désespoir de cause, estimant que ce serait lui voler son argent que de trahir ses espoirs, je travaillai tant que je pus. Sous l'égide de ma bonne parente, j'entrai au Conservatoire à seize ans et j'en sortis, deux ans après, avec un premier prix de chant. On y eût pu joindre un prix de sagesse. Je fus engagée au Théâtre-Lyrique. Ce n'était pas la fortune, mais l'aisance. Ma tante, qui croyait aux prédictions de l'avenir, se fit tirer les cartes. On lui certifia, pour moi, la plus brillante fortune tant que je conserverais ma voix et, pour conserver ma voix, la cartomancienne préconisait l'austère célibat: "La moindre amourette, le plus prudent mariage, et c'en est fait de son trille. Veillez-y!" Ma tante y veilla scrupuleusement. De fait, je débutai dans le rôle de *Virginie*. Mon adresse en scène, mon air chaste, ma voix de cristal, firent merveille. Le directeur encaissa de grosses recettes et le bruit courut bientôt que ma vertu portait chance. J'étais le fétiche, le talisman, la mascotte! On est très superstitieux dans le monde des théâtres. Personne ne me parla d'amour et, s'y fût-on risqué, ma tante était toujours là pour répondre. Je suivais ses conseils avec gratitude, avec docilité... et continuais de chanter *Virginie*. Il se trouva, parmi les ténors qui jouèrent avec moi, un brave garçon qui, moins superstitieux que les autres, osa me faire la cour. J'y fus sensible. Nous nous fiancâmes en secret, entre deux répliques, et, ma pauvre tante étant morte cette même année, nous voulûmes nous marier. Le directeur eut vent de nos intentions. Imbu des préjugés de ma tante, il me proposa une grande tournée en Amérique. Je n'étais pas trop riche, car je dépensais beaucoup pour mes costumes et mes bijoux. J'acceptai et signalai ce qu'il voulait, mais je n'appris que la veille du départ que

mon fiancé n'était pas du voyage. Vous imaginez mon chagrin. Par bonheur, ce chagrin n'altéra pas ma voix et, tous les artistes qui m'entouraient partageant la superstition du directeur, mon trille n'eut rien à craindre. Cette tournée, où naturellement je chantai *Virginie*, fut un triomphe, et nous gagnâmes beaucoup d'argent. Seulement, au retour, mon ténor se trouva marié. Autour de mon succès, cependant, la légende prenait plus de consistance. Je passais pour le porte-bonheur de la troupe et tout le monde croyait de bonne foi que tout nous réussirait tant qu'aucun Siegfried ne viendrait troubler le pudique sommeil de la Valkyrie!

Je me pris à sourire. Violette sourit aussi, puis ajouta:

— Cela vous paraît étrange... c'est pourtant la pure vérité. Tout le personnel du théâtre, fanatisé par la peur de voir baisser la recette, m'idolâtre... mais me surveille jalousement, et cela, depuis le directeur et le régisseur jusqu'au dernier des contrôleurs, en passant par les machinistes, les ouvreuses et le pompier de service! Ah! depuis douze ans, ce que je les ai chantées, les *Virginies*!

— Cependant, objectai-je, vous avez dû rencontrer des admirateurs autres que des ténors, des barytons, des basses ou des barnums superstitieux. Toute votre vie ne se passe pas au théâtre...

— Mais si... à peu près toute! Répétitions dans la journée, représentations le soir. Je me lève tard. Il reste, quoi qu'on en pense, bien peu de place aux hasards. Et puis, soupira-t-elle mollement, à la fin, la superstition m'a gagnée, moi aussi: je commence à croire à l'efficacité de ma sagesse. De plus, les amourettes et les mariages que je vois autour de moi ne sont guère encourageants... si bien que je crois qu'à présent, l'occasion se présentant, je serai sceptique et manquerai de conviction pour la saisir aux cheveux... si elle en a! Chanceuse dans la vertu, j'aurais trop peur de ne trouver que la *guigne* en amour. Et pourtant, ah! pourtant, je sens bien parfois, comme

dit la chanson, que mon pauvre cœur n'a pas ce qu'il désire!

Je risquai la question difficile:

— Avez-vous essayé?...

Elle hésita, rougit, puis, résolue à la franchise, avoua:

— Eh bien! oui... j'ai essayé. Pas plus tard que l'an dernier, j'exigeai un congé et, désespérant d'être réellement aimée dans cette existence fiévreuse et factice de coulisses, je suis partie: toute seule, *incognito*, non pas vers des plages à casino ou des villégiatures en vogue, mais à la vraie campagne, dans un petit village perdu en plein bocage. Je me suis mise en pension dans une ferme isolée, sous bois, au bord d'une sinieuse et limpide rivière, où je flânais en barque tout le jour et prenais chaque soir un bain délicieux. C'est là que j'attendis l'aventure rêvée.

— Eh bien...?

— Elle faillit se produire. En canotant, je découvris, près de la ferme, au bord de la rivière, un cottage enfoui sous les roses et le jasmin. Dans le jardin en terrasse; j'apercevais de loin un vieux monsieur qui se promenait à petits pas, lentement, au bras d'un grand beau jeune homme blond. Je ramai souvent de ce côté-là, l'imagination frappée et le cœur ému de l'attitude mutuellement affectueuse et dévouée de ce fils et de ce père si étroitement unis! Je me pris à rêver un honnête bonheur dans cette maisonnette, sous ces ombrages paisibles, entre ce digne vieillard et ce beau grand jeune homme. Bon fils, celui-ci ne ferait-il pas un excellent mari? Oui, mais comment faire sa connaissance ou seulement fixer son attention? Je désespérais quand l'occasion souhaitée s'offrit d'elle-même. Vers la fin d'une journée très chaude, je flânais, selon ma coutume, en barque, sur la rivière. Simplement vêtue, d'un peignoir de laine blanche endossé par-dessus mon costume de bain, je cherchais un endroit bien à l'ombre pour faire ma pleine eau. L'ayant trouvé non loin du cottage, j'amarrai mon bateau et m'élançai dans l'onde. A la troisième brasse, surprise et charmée, j'aperçus sous un saule, assis sur le talus gazonné

de la rive, mon beau jeune homme blond. Il était seul! Cette coïncidence romanesque m'exalta. Dans un subit instinct de coquetterie, je me pris à mimer gracieusement mon rôle de sirène: on n'est pas comédienne pour rien! Tout en nageant, je dénouai mes cheveux d'or sur mes épaules de neige, je jouai la nymphe des eaux s'ébattant librement.

— Et le jeune homme?

— Immobile et muet, il fixait sur moi ses grands beaux yeux tout embrumés de rêve: il se croyait sans doute le jouet d'un enchantement devant cette prestigieuse apparition de fée des eaux; je le devinais sans souffler, fasciné, hypnotisé d'admiration... et, dame! enivrée, enhardie du succès de ma séduction, je me rapprochais de la rive pour prendre pied et rendre le premier entretien plus facile, quand, tout à coup, je vis le père du jeune homme accourir tout inquiet vers la berge. Extrêmement contrariée, je n'eus que le temps de feindre l'affarouchement d'une Diane surprise au bain et de pousser un joli petit cri de pudique frayeur. Ce ne fut pas le jeune homme, ce fut le vieillard qui s'excusa:

— Oh! pardon de vous avoir fait peur, mademoiselle; vous me voyez désolé de troubler vos gracieux ébats; mais mon fils était seul depuis quelques moments et, au bruit de l'eau remuée, j'ai eu très peur pour lui...

Cette peur du papa me parut ridicule, et agacée que ce grand benêt, toujours immobile et muet, ne manifestât rien de ses impressions, je reculai, affectant de gémir d'une voix plus confuse, plus désolée:

— Oh! monsieur! si j'avais pu me douter qu'on me regardait!

Et le papa, touché, m'avoua très bienveillant:

— Il n'y a pas grand mal, mademoiselle; je suis, moi, un très vieil homme... et mon fils est aveugle de naissance!

Ici, je ne pus me tenir de rire, et Violette, riant aussi de toutes ses petites dents blanches, acheva:

— Pour une fois que je me mettais en tels frais de séduction, convenez que,

tomber sur un aveugle, c'était vraiment la *guigne*! Cela m'a tellement dépitée que, depuis, je me tiens coite. J'ai repris le théâtre; j'y ai ramené la recette... et ma vertu.

Le groupe des artistes, inquiet de notre longue causerie, se rapprochant, elle me donna congé dans une poignée de main.

— Je ne veux pas abuser de la pa-

tience de mes bons chaperons. Allons, au revoir! fit-elle dans son exquis sourire. Quoi que j'aie pu vous dire, ne me plaignez pas trop, car la vertu, même dans notre métier, ce n'est pas plus dur qu'autre chose... et puis, voyez-vous, maintenant que je suis faite au rôle, ça, me manquerait trop de ne plus chanter les *Virginies*!



PRISCILLA'S PURSE

PRISCILLA'S purse was built to hold
Much more than common yellow gold.
Its daintiness can far surpass
The purse of any other lass.

And yet, withal, I hate to see
Priscilla's purse when she's with me,
Because it tokens woes and quips;
You see, it rests upon her lips—
Priscilla's purse.

REYNALD SMITH PICKERING.



HIS SERVICE

REEDER—From Colonel Sblud's stories it would seem that he was quite an important figure in the war, and yet I cannot recall having seen his name mentioned in any of the histories.

SPORTY—No, I reckon he was just one of the "also rans."



THE BEST OF REASONS

"LOOK here, sir, you've always paid me before."
"But before, I never owed you enough to make it an object."

UNDER MY THUMB

By Hillhouse Cromwell

"O H, drop it, drop it, drop it, Miss Violet," he said. "There's no use arguing this question. The earth is still man's, and the fullness thereof—including woman. A woman has no more chance to take possession of the simple and daily privileges which are labeled 'masculine' than she ever had. They seem to be just lying about loose; and they don't appear to be of great value or importance, anyhow. But they've got the brand on 'em, 'masculine'—every one—duly authenticated and registered; and just let some ill-advised woman try annexing one of 'em, and see if she isn't a great deal worse than lynched."

I looked resentfully down the long table—Marjorie always had such crowds at her dinners. There she sat, fat and contented, at one end of the board; and Bob, fat and contented, at the other. The dinner was perfect, and I was spoiling it for myself by being vexed at Major Jarvis. But was I vexed at what he said, or at something within me which answered him?

"Come, now," his voice went on, teasingly, "let's put the case. Suppose yourself to be alone in any large city which you know well, but in which you are not well known; would you dare to walk out upon its streets and accept cheerfully the first chance-met diversion which offered itself to you? I talk to any respectable-looking individual who talks to me. And, gad, I learn a lot that way, and am often vastly amused; thieves, bunco-men, ladies with disabled reputations

—or none—all, I am proud to say, have contributed incidentally to my education in life. Isn't it true that if a woman spoke to you, you would think her *déclassée*, or that she wanted to pick your pocket?"

"It is true," I answered, "or it has been; but it shall be true no more. If my mental lungs would get a freer breath were I to open the doors of civil kindness to strangers—why, I should do it, that's all."

Again Major Jarvis laughed, his low-toned, well-bred laugh.

"Listen, people," he said; and although he scarcely raised his voice, almost the entire table turned to harken. "Here is a young rebel, who proposes to have the masculine rights while retaining the feminine privileges. Miss Violet Hetherington, ladies and gentlemen, proposes, the next time she has an opportunity, to swagger down the streets of whatever city she may chance to be in unchaperoned, with her metaphorical hands in her figurative pockets——"

"Women have no other kind—their pockets are all figurative!" cried a gay voice, whose owner I could not see.

"Well, then, she proposes as near as I can make it out to paint the town, if not red, at least of a marked rosy hue. Look your last upon the damsel. You will have to drop her acquaintance shortly, I'm thinking."

"Tut, tut!" murmured Leigh King, with that ridiculous solemn cluck of his; "tut, tut! shame——"

"Too bad, too bad!" agreed Hardsely; "pretty girl Vi was. But, don't

you know, I always somehow mis-doubted; don't you know, sort of half expected—"

"Yes—um—er—that's right, old man, I know. A sort of—ah!" And they winked and guffawed.

Marjorie made her plaintive protest heard, as this din abated.

"It's absurd, Violet. You're much too pretty. That's one of the compensations in being downright ugly—one can tear around and have such a lot of fun. But, goodness! a pretty woman—not to mention such a howling beauty as Vi—daren't manifest a disposition to be emancipated."

"In short, Miss Violet," summed up Bourke Hassan, from across the table, "handsome women are the goods that belong to the masculine half of creation, and we've made laws to hold a tight rein on them. If there were such a thing as an ugly woman—which I don't believe at all"—and he rolled his sleepy blue eyes down at Marjorie, with an exaggerated air of adoration, which is one of his regular performances—"I say, if there *were* any ugly women, we'd let them frisk around a bit; but seeing that this is a man's world, we've made it absolutely necessary for a pretty woman to behave herself."

"Behave!" I repeated, in deep scorn. "What an absurd word! As if anybody had said anything about behaving! The only point Major Jarvis and I were discussing was that men conducted themselves like human beings, and he says that women conduct themselves like women. My sole and modest announcement was that henceforth I was going to conduct myself like a human being. When a thing interests me, I shall say so. When I want to go somewhere—"

"Er, 'somewhere'—that is anywhere, eh?" interjected Major Jarvis.

"Yes, anywhere," I answered, sharply, "I shall go. When I want to speak to an individual, I shall speak to him—or her, or it—without a prefatory week of prayer—without an introduction, if I like."

"No," chimed in Marjorie, "you'll

take your week of prayer afterward—that's more like the usual thing."

Marjorie is my sister-in-law. If you have not a sister-in-law, pray do not invest in one upon my recommendation; I have never been known to hold that they added in the least to one's comfort.

"I don't want to do anything really dreadful," I announced.

"How disappointing!" murmured Major Jarvis, at my ear.

I gave him a withering look, at which he pretended to shiver, and really laughed.

"Now you're simply maudlin," Kathleen Hoffman pronounced. "You were somewhat interesting in the other phase; one fancied there might be developments along that line; but a female who desires to burst her fetters with a loud report and fierce outcry, and rush madly to a Christian Endeavor meeting, is—well—"

"Women always paw the air like that," Bob interrupted, with brotherly freedom. "Nobody needs to be much scared when they pass you out such a programme. Keep 'em talking, and they'll generally work it off that way."

"Women are words—men are deeds," commented a widow upon Bourke Hassan's left. She had dusky blond hair, like dirty gold, and long, green eyes. Men called her handsome. I felt that I hated her, as she spoke, in her lazy drawl, which grudged you the syllables.

My lips parted to say, "Very well. I'll be words no more. I'll be deeds."

The long, green eyes dwelt an illuminating moment on my flushed face. A spark seemed to leap from their cool depths and light my path. Here was one woman who said little and did as she pleased. To such, this personal discussion of one's actions appeared childish. Such a one felt no need to threaten and bluster. I was silenced. My lips closed, and straightened themselves into a grim line of resolution which made the green eyes sparkle and dance with unexpressed mirth.

I looked up and down the table—

I sat about midway. Here were my own people, the units of the human family among which I had been bred. Major Jarvis gave me my first set of corals, and twenty years later presented the largest bouquet among my debutante's spoils. Bourke Hassan I had flirted with since we were both in short frocks at the same kindergarten. Bob was my brother, and brothers must be pitied and endured, even though one may not feel warmly moved to embrace them. As for the women, I never liked anything Marjorie did; Kathleen Hoffman and I had quarreled fiercely, not six months ago, over golf; the widow I had always distrusted; yet, at the touchstone of this discussion, a line of fire, so it seemed to me, ran between the masculine and feminine diners, dividing them into sheep and goats.

The men—I raged at them as I noted it—looked secure, considering, patronizing. There they were, in their monstrous evening dress, with their shorn heads, pretending to admire and waiting to be adored. The women—my eyes softened as they rested upon my sister slaves, decked, constricted, displayed; affecting to rule, and watching abjectly to see if they would be accepted.

"Bob," I said, sourly, "if you knew one half as much about women as you think you do about autos, you wouldn't talk so much."

"There's no use getting in a rage and tearing up the ground like that," Bob resumed. (Brothers are such a nuisance. They know so much and such inconvenient things about one.) "It isn't the wicked things men—or women—do, that make society pitch them out, neck and crop. We talk about morality; the morality of the social world is all in the eleventh commandment, the one about being found out. The unforgivable sin, socially speaking, is defiance. Now, for instance, you girls can smoke all the cigarettes you want to around the table here. Most of the women I know smoke more or less. If one of you put a cigarette in her mouth and trotted down the

Avenue smoking to-morrow morning, the rest of you wouldn't speak to her to-morrow night. Isn't that so?"

"Good gracious, Robert, you're exactly right!" Kathleen Hoffman cried. "You'd better do something for him, Marjorie. Tie up his head in pounded ice, or something. He doesn't often have an idea like that, does he? If he gets to fulminating original gospels of this sort frequently, he'll do himself mischief."

"It's a funny thing," pursued Bourke Hassan, reflectively, "that if you only hit Mrs. Grundy hard enough, she'll cotton to it. Robert says truly that if you walked down the Avenue, once, smoking, you'd be a scandal. But I say that if you made a practice of it—and did no worse—you'd cease to be a scandal; the novelty would wear off. More, when people who came from other places saw you promenading and smoking for the first time, and professed themselves shocked, the local gossips would take up the cudgels for you. They would come to have a sort of civic pride in you as an institution different from that possessed by other towns. George Sand was doing more than burn tobacco when she strode up and down the foyer between acts smoking a big, black cigar; she was conquering for herself the position of a chartered libertine."

"But the feeling of sex is sacred to humanity," said Hetherington. "Who's that chap in Barrie's 'Sentimental Tommy'?—Latta, the weaver, you know. Do you remember his saying, because he'd played the coward before the girl who loved him, that he had 'violated the feeling of sex'? That's it; women expect certain things of men—courage, audacity, a reasonable amount of coarseness, a hardihood in meeting the exigencies of life. They even expect certain vices—yes, by George! and miss 'em if they're not there. Men expect certain things of a woman—to be as dainty about her associates as a cat crossing a muddy street; to draw back and stare at a stranger who addresses her; to be utterly without initiative; to want—to

want—well, to want her life cooked for herself, as one might say."

There was a chorus of laughing assent from the men. "You've hit it, Robert; with your usual acumen, you have hit the nail squarely on the head."

And Bourke Hassan added: "We men eat life raw. It has to be cooked for women. So the thing has been since time was, since men and women were. So it will be to the end, pretty rebels to the contrary, notwithstanding," bowing with mock gravity toward me.

"Very well," I said, as I rose; "my life may have to be cooked—some things are nasty raw—but that's not saying that I won't *taste* it raw. And, anyhow, it won't be cooked according to your recipe." Then, including them all in one flaming glance, I sailed out.

II

Now, as Major Jarvis had phrased it, I was myself "up against the proposition." In New York to see about the publication of a novel, determined not to pose as a scribbling society woman, I had notified no friends of my intention to be there. The only person who knew I was in town was a Mr. Hardwicke, literary editor of *The Planet*, who had encouraged me with the idea that his paper might run my story serially.

For three years I had conducted a more or less close correspondence with him in shorthand. My novel was full of actual facts and real personages. It was more nearly a reporter's account of certain things with which I was familiar than a piece of fiction. Yet I had taken much joy in doing something other than attempt to dress better than the women of my circle, and drift from one social function to another.

"Alone in a city which I knew well, and where I was practically unknown!" I interrogated my face in the dressing-glass. "Life, my young friend," I asked, "will you take it cooked—or raw?" She looked back at me, the

girl in the glass, with eyes like stars; her lips formed themselves into innocent smiles—you would not have guessed for a moment that the minx was counseling me to the unpardonable sin of defiance. As I passed out, the smoking and chatting men in the rotunda and office regarded me with a curiosity which was not that friendly, indifferent curiosity they showed their fellow-men.

Was it, after all, any use trying to be wiser than the race-thought of centuries? I turned and hurried down to the ladies' entrance.

As I hesitated upon the curb, a handsome private coupé drew up before me. The driver, stooping down, said in a low tone: "I am glad to find you, madam; your husband has sent me for you."

Was the adventure, for which I had declared myself eager, presenting itself to me? I turned to the cabman and answered, promptly: "You are mistaken in the person, I think. I am not——"

"Not married!" he finished, instantly and eagerly. "Oh, then you are the other lady—the young lady."

I was tasting it raw—and the flavor surprised, yet pleased, my untried palate, the fumes flew to my head. I glanced down the street, looking, I do believe, for the mosque towers and minarets of Bagdad, to hear the camel-driver's note, or the water-carrier's droning cry as he passed the corner. No, there were a half-dozen automobiles hurrying by. The hotel was behind me. Across Madison Square, the Diana twinkled with light, and aimed forever at an unseen quarry. I was merely in New York.

For the information of my sisters who have not stricken off the shackles, I will say that it is the first plunge which daunts. A woman is a coward because she thinks she is a coward. I jumped into the coupé, the door slammed, and we drove away northward. Far up-town, I was delivered into the hands of a discreet maid, in the hallway of a magnificent detached mansion. The woman told me that I

was expected, and suggested that I would wish to make some changes in my toilette, since there were guests to meet me, displaying to my astonished eyes a number of handsome costumes, from which I selected.

On entering the drawing-room, I found myself in the midst of what appeared to be a woman's evening reception.

My hostess, who seemed to be of middle age, superbly gowned, regarded me with a close scrutiny, beneath which I read a painful anxiety that I should be that—whatever it was—for which she looked, of which she felt herself to stand in desperate need. She called me Violet, without prefix, and apparently with the design of giving the impression that I was an old friend. The women in the room to whom she presented me were all as handsomely gowned as myself. They were not talking to one another to any extent, and there was an air of uneasiness in the room. Then I observed, with the relief of one who guesses a puzzling conundrum, that there were twelve guests present beside myself. I had evidently been bidden in this curious fashion to prevent the fatal thirteen at table. The next moment the curtains of an alcove parted, and a young girl who had been lingering there, joined us, just as the butler in the archway announced, "Madame, supper is served."

The table was round, the lace upon it strange to me—a recondite Russian with dull Eastern shades in its mesh. Repeating these dusk tints were purple and pink orchids, piled lavishly in a great bowl of lustrous beaten silver. A wonderful samovar, a curious cheese course served with individual scoops or spoons of dull silver crusted with turquoises, and a chafing-dish with birds in wine, which proved to be an odd dragon-foot affair of Chinese bronze, gave a charming flavor of Russia and the Orient to the table fittings.

My first glance showed me a curious and suggestive fact; the women at the table were all unusually beautiful and young. I realized—though the type

of beauty varied widely—a something common to all. I imagined that this might be a family resemblance, and the function, after all, a family supper party. But as I studied them, I found what I had taken for a family resemblance to be a hardihood, a look half-defiant, half-furtive, which showed itself at some unguarded moment upon each of these young and beautiful countenances.

It seems absurd now, but the knowledge came upon me with a shock that they were all as utter strangers to one another, and to their surroundings, as I to them. If they had not been brought to the house in exactly the same way I had, their costumes had been similarly provided. The woman across from me had made a terrific choice in frocks; a dark beauty, she had dragged the stiff folds of a rich brocade, which would have been becoming to a slender, gray-haired woman, around her plump form and naively fastened them with—stick pins! There was a lack of finish about the girl's full lips which promised just the vulgar, facile taste that counseled her, with her complexion, to wear red. She had taken the garniture of poppies from her frock, and wore them wreath-wise upon her head. She looked like a dismantled stage fairy.

My hostess continued to distinguish me, by showing me more attention than the others, and adroitly conveyed the impression that I was a near friend or relative. It seemed that my appearance, or my manner of meeting these strange circumstances, pleased her. And yet, "pleased" is not quite the word. She was like a woman playing a game, working out a problem; and I fancied that she was strained to the breaking point in urgent eagerness that my behavior and person should be the answer to her needs, the solution of her problem.

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a torrent. Finding lodgment on a rock in mid-stream, the lady dragged up the treasure bags they were carrying. It seemed that this would push the knight's hand away from its hold. In short, it became a question with the lady between her love and her wealth.

Heaven knows what the women about that table thought of themselves and the adventure upon which they now seemed embarked, what they had come from, what they would go back to, what long-kept rules they had broken to be there at all; but it is certain that every one of them was hypnotized. There they leaned, lips apart, eyes upon the speaker's face, countenances relaxed till you might have read in each the thought its owner was most anxious to conceal.

She put the question to each of her guests in turn—"What would you have done?" She let them see that it was a question between fine-spun sentiment and self-interest. Ophelia of the poppies, and many another, failed to answer her satisfactorily. Either they showed too much greed, too dangerous a rapacity, or they displayed vacillating minds. My turn found me frivolously intent upon giving just the polished, well-bred, heartless answer which would please her.

"I should have been sure my lover was a good swimmer," I drawled, "else, why venture into torrents with me? I should have said to him, 'Swim for your life, sir; I will take care of your wife and your wealth.'"

This answer suited so well that, to use a homely phrase, it broke up the meeting. I stood beside my hostess while she bowed the others out, detaining me with the same fiction that I was a relative. The maid followed each guest to her carriage with a bundle which I conceived to contain the clothes in which they had arrived.

III

As the last guest left us, I gazed after her in sudden terror of the sit-

uation. The moment we were alone, my hostess's poise faltered. I saw that her forces were nearly exhausted, that they needed to be rallied, flogged to the pace, since the culmination of whatever she had planned was just in view.

She turned to me. "Don't ask questions," she almost panted, as I drew away and opened my lips. "You were brought here for a purpose."

"What is it?" I cried, recoiling. "What do you want of me?"

She clutched my wrist till she hurt me. She put her face close to mine, and fairly gasped out, "There is a dying man in the next room, whom you—"

"I will have nothing to do with it," I protested. "Why, good heaven! what—what a— Let me go—let me go at once! We have had enough of this unconscionable fooling. Let me go! I tell you I will not—"

"No, no!" She clung to my wrist, her eyes burning in her white face. "You are the one—beautiful—and reckless, but not coarse—a lady. He would trust and receive you."

"Who would trust and receive me?" I inquired, incautiously. "What under heaven do you mean?"

"You must marry—no, hear me out—at least, hear what I have to say!" For I had drawn violently back in fear and repugnance.

She calmed her voice and manner, and addressed me quietly, even mildly. "Listen, dear girl," she said, "you are in the De Armond place. I am Mrs. De Armond. It is my son who—" Her breath failed her; she nodded with tightly-pressed lips toward the door which I had refused to pass.

Something in my heart failed, too, with that failing breath of hers. The De Armond place! Mrs. De Armond! I was under the roof with Wallace De Armond! For a few moments this thought burned out every other from my mind.

I do not remember when I first heard of Wallace De Armond, son of that Wallace De Armond who made

the enormous fortune in the protected pearl fisheries of the South Seas. Heir to a vast fortune, this young fellow had been born and bred abroad. Europe, Australia, India and China—he had traveled, studied and dreamed through them all. Fifteen years after the death of his father, the young man came to New York, where he at once became a marked and interesting figure. His charities, his intellectual attainments, his great personal beauty became topics of as unfailing interest to newspaper gossip as his enormous wealth.

Mrs. De Armond watched my face. "Under the terms of his father's will, he comes of age to-night—his twenty-fifth birthday. And all his wealth will be his absolutely, if he is married before twelve o'clock. If he is not—if he remains unmarried—the money goes to another branch of the family—a cousin."

I remembered, with a sudden pain at my heart, the picture of Wallace De Armond, handsome and winning as a young Lohengrin or Launcelot, which stood now upon my dressing-table at home—and he was dying.

"He must be married," she urged. "Why do you hesitate? I tell you the truth when I tell you that he is a dying man. He doesn't know it, but he can live only a few weeks more. The fortune is immense. Money—money, my dear girl; after all, money is the thing in this world. The position of a widow is—is an enviable one."

A sense of something seriously wrong grew upon me, and with it the conviction came that I might be of value to Wallace De Armond by going forward with the matter, at least, so far as to see him. By agreeing with Mrs. De Armond, I might find whether help were needed, and, if it were, offer it.

I hardened my resolution and my voice, and answered as I fancied she wished.

"Spoken like a sensible girl—thank heaven for it! Come, you shall see him. We will get that over. I am sure he cannot fail to be pleased with

you." She turned and searched my face again. "You will try to please him?" she asked. "You will make every effort? I assure you I have proposed plans to him—oh, plans! But here are you, a reality and a very charming one. You must please him—it is beyond reason that you shouldn't—and you and I will remain the best of friends. It is so, is it not?"

Speech seemed beyond me, but I managed to nod earnestly.

"Just so," she murmured, and drew me with her into an adjoining room, the door of which she unlocked.

I braced myself for sight of a sick-room with its couch, its white-capped nurses, its little stand with an array of bottles. Instead, I saw coming toward us down the empty, brilliantly-lighted apartment which we now entered, a young man in evening dress, in the flower of his manhood, and apparently in perfect health.

"This is my son," Mrs. De Armond said. Then, drawing me forward, she added, in explanation to him, "Here she is."

It was indeed Wallace De Armond, the original of the picture which had been daily familiar to my eyes for more than a year. He turned aside, with a gesture of dismissal; then, catching my eye, looked eagerly into my face. At last he moved impulsively toward me, with both hands outstretched to clasp mine. Glancing toward his step-mother, "Who is this?" he asked. "Does she know? Have you told her?"

Mrs. De Armond nodded. "I have told her all that she needs to know," she answered. "You two will want to talk together." And she made as though to leave us alone.

In my distress and confusion, I turned to follow or detain her, only to be met by the closing door. With my hand upon the knob, and in as wild a tumult of mind and feeling as a girl could ever expect to experience, I spoke over my shoulder, crying: "I have agreed to nothing! I did not know when I came here that I—"

"Hush!" he interrupted, as he

gently lifted my hand from the knob; "I understand. Mrs. De Armond has enlisted your sympathies——"

"But, indeed, no—you are mistaken. I came into this matter—I came into this house—in the frivolous spirit. I accepted it as a jest—embarked upon it for mere amusement. I had no idea of encouraging realities, and such—such painful realities."

His eyes dilated with distress, and fixed themselves hungrily upon my face. "Painful realities," he repeated, under his breath. "I have been starved for any human sympathy. I dare say I am childishly credulous and—presuming. I am too quick to fancy that you care."

"Oh, I do care—I do," I answered, repentantly, and put both my hands in his.

Again that strange speech of his stepmother's presented itself before me; he was "a dying man!" How sinister it sounded, as I looked at him, in the full flush of health and young, virile beauty.

"I will do anything I can for you," I declared. "Tell me—your mother is mistaken, she has explained nothing to me. I am only bewildered and——"

A week ago I would have added "frightened." To-night I concluded with the word "uncertain."

Impulsively he drew me to a sofa, and seated himself beside me. "Mrs. De Armond"—I noticed that he did not call her mother, nor speak of her even as his stepmother—"is very much distressed because, if midnight sees me unmarried, I lose the entire estate. You know so much?" he said, gently. Then, after a pause, and with those charming eyes of his fixed full on my face, he added, "Not only do I lose it, but it goes to a cousin, entirely out of her hands and mine, leaving neither of us anything but an income—an annuity."

"I see," I replied, quietly; "she would be losing it as well."

A little flash went over his face. He breathed a short, relieved sigh; but he said nothing, at first; he simply sat looking thoughtfully down. "She

would be losing it as well," he repeated, finally. "My father was old-world in his feeling; his hope was to found a family. His will covered the case by bequest and injunction. If I were not married at twenty-five, then a life income was to be mine, my cousin to have the estate and carry on the name."

His voice dropped low. "You saw the door unlocked," he breathed. "You know I am a prisoner. You must guess, as I do, that what we say may be listened to—by that woman, or those in her employ. Now, Mrs. De Armond and I are both weary, worn out by a long series of battles, skirmishes and encounters, and finally by this long, bitter siege." His beautiful eyes swept the walls of the room. "I believe her to be mad—a dangerous maniac." His voice was scarce more than an articulate breath; his eyes were lowered; his attitude told nothing. "She has brooded over this matter till she has become insane. At first, it seemed to satisfy her if I could, by marrying some creature who could be bought off, or someone in the last stages of an illness, comply with the terms of the will and hold the estate for both of us. Do you wonder that I shrank from such unions when she put them before me?"

"But how could she?" I interrupted, wonderingly. "You are a man. How could she keep you here and dictate whom you shall marry?"

There it was again, the old distinction the race is always making. History is full of women forced to ghastly and uncongenial marriages, to feed a father's ambition, a brother's greed, or as a mere expression of tyrannical authority on the part of the males of her family. I myself knew of a dozen instances—even in modern life—where the bride's preferences had been so little consulted that the marriage might almost have been called a forced one. Yet, put a man as protagonist, and the performance seemed bizarre, incongruous, altogether incredible.

"She is done with that, I think," he returned as quietly. "She is no longer

planning that she and I should share the De Armond estate. Poor soul! Her madness takes the turn of getting rid of me. She told me, a month ago, the route which I was to travel out of her way."

"You will be murdered!" I breathed, staring at him with terrified eyes.

His own met mine gratefully. "Look down," he uttered softly, then, "Not quite so bad as that," he whispered, with just the ghost of a little laugh. "You know it is a peculiarity of insane people, as of drunken men, to think all the rest of the world affected as they are. Did she not say that I was insane, at least mentally unsound? Didn't she say that? Then what could she possibly have said, to leave you so white and distressed?" And he clasped both my hands, as he searched my face intently.

I shook my head. "No, no, not that!" I said. "She cast no doubt at all upon your sanity. She told me nothing but that you were—" I could not get out the word "dying," and compromised on—"coming of age to-night, and that you lost the money unless you were married before midnight."

Wallace hesitated an instant. "I think I ought to tell you," he began, "that I—you and I, if you are willing I should put it so—well, we are not in the hands of an irresponsible madwoman alone. Dr. Etheredge—the name is well known to you, isn't it, as that of a physician of the very highest standing?"

I nodded.

"Etheredge is a man of science," he continued, "but without heart or conscience. You know he is a specialist in diseases of the mind. He has a private asylum, which he calls a sanatorium. He knows, as well as you or I—oh, of course he knows very much better!—that Mrs. De Armond is mentally unbalanced, and that the criminal course in which he is abetting her will probably end, with her, in acute mania—violent, raving madness."

"Is he in the house, do you think?" I asked.

"No; he would not be here at such a

time. I guess his connection with the later phases of the campaign only because some of the plans have been so masterly. I feel sure of it, though. It is to his place I shall be sent if Mrs. De Armond can get me safely married to a wife with whom she might hope to treat for the estate—whom she could hope to bribe."

He slipped from the sofa beside me, and dropped lightly on one knee, where he could gaze more easily up into my face. "It will look well," he murmured, with what strove to be a smile, "if anyone is watching us—as no doubt some one is. . . . A man does not like to be pinched off at twenty-five," he went on, in the same quiet, even voice. "But I believe I would rather be put out of the way entirely than thrust, sane, into an asylum. I have fought this thing now, single-handed, for months, and I am almost ready to say that I am beaten. Her ingenuity is such—she is such a persuasive woman—she has so utterly sane a manner—no," he dropped his head and his glance as he said it, "no, there is no hope."

I appreciated to the full the delicacy which did not urge any hope which might have been in me. "I think there is a chance," I began, softly.

He looked up. I felt that the pallor of his countenance was reflected in my own. His face, raised appealingly, was like that of the knight struggling with the current, in Mrs. De Armond's story.

I realized now just why she had told that story, just what she thought my answer to it expressed. "Let him shift for himself," she had hoped I would say, and act upon it; she had hoped I might let him struggle out as best he could, leaving him to the merciless current of her greed and her power.

As Wallace watched me eagerly, I realized that here again was an open door—the door which our light dinner-table talk the week before at my brother Bob's had more than asserted no woman dare pass. As for men marrying women of whom they know little—whom they may barely have

met—to rescue them from trying situations—why, romance is full of such stories; the thing has been of fairly frequent occurrence in real life, beyond a doubt. Apparently, a man need know no more of a woman in some situation of peril or cruelty or hardship which appeals to his chivalrous nature, than that she is fair to look upon, and that he feels toward her the world-old attraction which he dignifies by the name of love, to make marriage with her a possibility, if he so desire. Well, I had said I would be a man. Here was the man's rôle offered me—here was the reversal of the usual situation. I came with strength. I came to save. Would I have that greater strength to dare the unconventional—to act the man's part?

The expression in Wallace's eyes pierced my heart. Dropping my hands on his shoulders, I whispered, "I will help, I came to help. God sent me, I think. I am ready to do whatever is necessary to save your life, for that is what I think is in danger."

The position was a cruel one.

"I suppose you know," he began, hastily, watching me with those soft, dark eyes I knew so well, and rushing at the issue like a high-strung woman, who seems almost brusque in her fever to end the discussion of a dreaded point, "I suppose you know that if we were to call Mrs. De Armond and say that we had agreed to—had agreed—to marry before midnight"—the red ran over his pale cheeks—"it would immensely simplify matters." And now the crimson ebbed, and left the handsome face very pale once more. "But, my dearest girl," and he looked at me apprehensively, "it would be a serious step for you. She has her man here, a magistrate, or something of the sort, and would demand that the ceremony actually take place at once."

As he bent to me, and solicitously searched my face, I drew his dear head toward me, reckless of the possibility of espionage, and kissed him with rapture. I don't wonder men feel like gods when they make love to women! I knew now why no man

I ever met had stirred my heart. It wasn't in me—it simply wasn't in me to thrill and blush and be happy because I pleased some one, because some one offered me love. But give me the man's part—or a tithe of it—let me be, even measurably, looked to, to lead, to help and sustain, to originate—and my fancy had free rein to centre itself upon the man who needed me.

"You angel," Wallace murmured, and his lips were upon my hair, my brow, my eyelids, and then my lips. "Dearest, this is a matter of life and death. We both know that. We will come out of it alive, I feel sure; but if you are frightened, if you regret, if anything in your soul counsels you against me, and my sinister affairs, draw back now. Don't break my heart by being sorry when it is too late."

I was tasting life raw, and I liked the flavor. I enjoyed the masculine position of deciding, offering, giving. I laid both hands in those of my future husband, and said, simply:

"I shall never turn back. We shall stand together for life or death."

It was the strangest wedding for Violet Hetherington that could be imagined. I had always said that I would not have a great display at my marriage, but this naked, legal form—this poor, shorn, almost squalid, civil rite—this mournful travesty of a wedding, before a casual justice of the peace with dubious linen and unclean finger-nails, with a footman and housemaid for guests, fear holding the door and nameless suspicion squatting, as it were, in every shadowed corner—this passed my wildest imaginings!

When it was over and the three of us alone together, I made an attempt which Wallace and I had agreed upon—asking to be allowed to send for my wardrobe, or go for it.

Mrs. De Armond countered with an offer that her maid should fetch my things, and a request that I come with her into her den and write my notes or telegrams. Seated at the desk, I began to write, and Mrs. De Armond watched me with burning eyes. "You

understand the whole case, now, don't you? You see how the land lies."

I nodded, without looking up.

"Why don't you say something?" she burst out, peevishly. "Why do you sit there and write with that knowing air? You want to pretend now that you don't think your husband is insane. You are after the money. But you shall never have it. You want to pretend that when I told you he was a dying man, I meant worse, worse, *worse!*" Her voice mounted upon the repeated worse to a sort of whispered shriek. It was the outburst for which I had been looking.

I managed to answer, very quietly: "I am in your hands." And I added that I had not wished to come to the house nor did I desire to remain, and that I was merely submitting gracefully to what I could not help. Mrs. De Armond laughed at me for my pains, and unmasked her fear that I was ready to turn now, and fight her for the De Armond millions—sharing them with the man I had just married. She paid me the compliment of stating that she believed I had courage, audacity—was as brave as a man, and she offered me a bargain. We were to stand together till Wallace was in a mad-house—she admitted that was the plan; then she promised an even division. I attempted to accept this with an equal countenance, but in some manner betrayed my loyalty to my husband. Accused of it, I answered with crimson cheeks and downcast eyes.

The best plans ever made are not made at all. Thinking, reasoning, weighing, never decided such a course of action as will spring, ready-made, from the chaos of ruin, at the bidding of the brave soul's necessity. As I saw Mrs. De Armond advance upon me, muttering, glancing from side to side, the whole campaign which I must inaugurate flashed in full detail before my mind.

I summoned a calm manner. I told her I was a reporter on *The Planet*. I said I came with her driver

hoping to get a story out of it. I could see that my plain, practical tone staggered her. She halted, laid hold upon a chair-back, and panted, "What then?"

I controlled myself by a strong effort, and assured her, quietly, that when I failed to return to the office at the proper time I should certainly be traced to her house. I could see that she studied me now, in an agony of doubt. "If the doctor were here!" I heard her mutter. "I can't think. I don't know what to do. If he were only here!"

Her next move took matters out of my hands; but it was the one for which I had prayed. She pushed me into a chair before her desk, thrust a pen into my hand, placed a sheet of paper before me and cried, "Write—tell them you won't be there!"

Oh, then I fenced desperately for time, time to put upon that paper what I wanted there, as well as the words she directed, and was to see. I came near rendering her suspicious, or so angry that she would not let me send the note at all. But in the end I accomplished my purpose, and held up the note for her to look at.

To her eye it bore three lines of big, bold writing, an elaborate close and signature. She read it as she stood; and afterward I held it toward her for a further inspection. The looking-over was brief. She folded it, put it into an envelope, and bade me seal and address it to my editor. Her ring brought the frightened maid. I cannot deny that the coldest chill I had yet felt seized me when I saw the woman's eyes, red and swollen with weeping. She glanced from her mistress to me, and without a word held out her hand for the note.

"No, I will not give it to you," Mrs. De Armond said, sharply. "You know I don't like whimpering. How dare you, Benton? What do you mean by it—you sniffing fool? Get out of my sight! Send Barnes here."

The maid went, reluctantly. The footman came so immediately that one could see he was at hand. In-

deed, it was plain that, of the few servants who had been retained for this night's work, all were in the suite of rooms with ourselves—or, at least, on the same floor with us.

Mrs. De Armond's instructions to the man left me no doubt as to the delivery of my note. Whether Mr. Hardwicke, who was the only soul I knew in *The Planet* office, would be there to receive my message, or whether, receiving it, he would overlook its peculiar significance, I could not guess. But I had done my best; I had done the only thing that occurred to me under the circumstances; the rest was not now with me, but with heaven; and I asked Mrs. De Armond with a light heart if I might go back and talk once more with my husband.

With a carelessness which was ominous, she gave the desired permission. People are not afraid of those whom they justly suppose to be helpless in their hands. She looked me up and down with a jarring laugh.

"My stepson," she said, "has kept himself remarkably free from feminine entanglements. I have always suspected abysses of sentimentality in him, however; and now he seems about to justify my opinion. Considering the circumstances, I find your turtle-dove attitude one of the most humorous things I have ever encountered."

IV

WHEN I went back to my husband, he greeted me with a cry of delight.

"Another dreadful five minutes, and I should have gone searching for you, my poor darling," he said; "though, God knows, that might have been the worst possible thing for your safety."

There, in the long, brilliant drawing-room, strangely empty and forlorn under its myriad softly glowing lights, he told me the history of his childhood.

"What of your cousin?" I asked.

"Oh, he and I are good friends—he's a good fellow. If I could have got

word to him at any time he would have helped me out; but he and I have not been allowed to communicate. In the last five years, as the time of my absolute inheritance of the fortune drew near, Mrs. De Armond has brooded upon this matter till she has become insane. I think, sometimes, that great fortunes are absolutely poisonous in their effect upon weak human nature. The poison has worked upon Dr. Etheredge, sound and sane, a brilliant, successful man, as well as upon that poor woman. He sets her on to do what he is unwilling even to plan—but what he is willing to profit by. I used to love that man, Violet, my darling," and the bright, eloquent eyes dwelt upon me half-piteously, half-quizzically; "but I have been like a stray dog, ready to love anything or anybody that was kind to me, and that was permitted to be near me. To think that from such poverty of the heart, I am suddenly come into these great riches!" And his lips gently touched my brow, cheeks and lips. "He is a brilliant creature, a fascinating talker, Dr. Etheredge, and I—a boy of twenty-two—fell under the spell of his charm very, very easily. He commenced about four years ago to attempt to persuade me that I was mentally unsound, or threatened with mental trouble. It was when I began my free kindergarten buildings—dear, do you remember? They were much talked about by the papers."

"Oh, yes, indeed, I remember perfectly," I replied.

"Well, they were taking a good deal of money; my stepmother was pledged to them; and I think he feared to see the estate—of which he hoped eventually to possess himself—depleted. I told you he was a man of great charm; for two horrible years, dearest, I believed them—Dr. Etheredge and my stepmother. I could see no motive for so devilish a deceit. You see, Violet, love," fondling my hands, "I have been so painfully, so desperately alone; there has been no creature to whom I could turn. I have had a correspondent—a woman."

My heart leaped in my bosom. At last, at last it was coming!

"I don't know whether she was old or young; but her soul was kin to mine," my loyal Wallace declared, looking honestly into my eyes.

"She wrote me first while we were abroad, when I was planning to imitate the English plan of University extension. She is a writer. We have exchanged letters—at very long intervals—ever since; and I have been tempted more than once to write out for her a full statement of my personal complications. There was a strength about her, a buoyancy, a freedom that promised everything. She was like you, dearest. She was the only real friend my life had known."

While he told me this I turned away, struggling with tears that came afresh—tears that made me happy. For I had been his correspondent. I had written those letters he so loved and praised, and read his answers to them—boyish, sad, merry, brilliant, always adorably frank utterances of a fine soul—had read them sitting before that picture on my dresser. Ah, yes, I had been Wallace's correspondent these two years; not otherwise could I have gone forward with this strange adventure, but that the letters which came to me had always rung clear and true.

"I wish you had written me. I wish you had trusted so much to my love for you," I said.

"What!" he cried, softly, "you?" And then again laying my hand upon his own heart, "You—Violet? Oh, of course—who else could it be? my friend, my helper, my star; and, my darling—my very heart; she is but one; she cannot be divided. It was you," he murmured, again and again, "of course, it was you. Every detail of your face and presence is just as I have imagined it, love."

We were standing so, oblivious of all about us, when suddenly Mrs. De Armond's voice broke the quiet. She was white with fury.

"I have—I have something to say to you, Mrs. Wallace De Armond," she began, in shaking tones. "As a last

possible chance of making terms with me—with me!—will you come? Let Wallace retire with his nurse and—attendants. It is you I want. I have something to say to you."

I shook my head, nor left the clasp of my husband's arms. I merely turned and said: "I will not talk to you."

"You pitiful ninny!" she fairly hissed. "You vulgar spooney! Ogling and holding hands and kissing, when you might—but I am done with you."

"Mrs. De Armond," my husband began, "my wife and I will sign over to you such portion of the estate—we will sign over the entire estate; we are agreed upon this matter."

It was, perhaps, the most unfortunate thing he could have said—my poor, impractical Wallace! Mention of the estate, the broad hint that she was attempting to put him out of the way to get possession of it, the tacit statement, indeed, of the whole criminal situation—infuriated her past all bounds. The confirmation that he and I were united in feeling, in heart, as well as by the ceremony which she had just witnessed, came near to rendering all I had done fruitless. I saw it clearly, and time was what I thought best to fight for. In this great city of New York a mad-woman's plans against two sane people could hardly stand the wear and tear of twenty-four hours. I knew, as I perceived the disaster wrought by this speech of Wallace's, just how many a practical man feels when he is trying to help an adorable, a deeply-loved, high-minded, impulsive, impractical woman.

"Oh, the money!" raved Mrs. De Armond. "You pretend to think that I would do you an injury for the sake of the money. That girl there—whom my coachman picked up on the streets, Wallace; don't forget that small fact!—is ready to sell her soul for the estate; but she will want it all. I warn you, Wallace, you had better trust to me. That creature is a fiend"—and a flicker crossed her face, lighted her eyes, twitched her features—"and crazy!" (Ah, here it was again—the

mad cry, "The world is mad!") "I saw she was insane when I first looked at her to-night."

If I could have dealt with the woman alone I think I might have soothed her. My poor boy had fought these shadows so long that they were realities to him.

"We have had enough of this," he began, sternly. "I will hear no more of it. And I will ask you to remember, madam, that when you speak of this lady you are speaking of my wife."

Could anything have been more impossible? A war, with such an ally under my banners, appealed to me as something between tragic and ludicrous. I had a hysterical desire to laugh and weep at the same instant.

"Your wife?" sneered Mrs. De Armond. "The wife of a husband who will be in a lunatic asylum to-morrow; a girl picked up in the streets—a creature from the Lord knows where."

"A reporter from *The Planet* office, Mrs. De Armond," I put in, smoothly; and at the plain, practical tone, coming across their raised, excited voices, Mrs. De Armond looked at me with a sort of panic in her face.

"See," I said, going forward, putting myself between her and her stepson, "See, you have me to buy or to treat with, after all. I didn't come here for any purpose but to get a good story for my paper, as you know. The story I got would be fine reading; but I am a poor girl; you have the power all in your own hands, I think you must stop this family bickering, and talk sensibly to me." Glancing back over my shoulder, I caught sight of Wallace's shocked, hurt face, and I could have laughed in spite of the terrors surrounding us.

I looked at my watch; had there been time enough? Was my note at *The Planet* office? A little query, like a poisoned dart, pierced through my thoughts; was it lying there unopened? Another followed. Had it been opened by someone other than Mr. Hardwicke, to whom it would not have conveyed the message I had placed upon it? These queries stung and tortured me. I felt my nerves going; I wished, as

many a man has wished in my situation, that the one I so much loved was not present. I thought I could put up a better fight if I were alone with the woman.

I had opened my lips to say so—or, rather, to urge a private interview—when there came the sound of steps on the stair—not the measured, quiet tread of servants, but the heavy, hurried tramp of running feet!

We three stood as if turned to stone, and interrogated one another with terrible eyes. I suppose we were all equally afraid. That sound—it might mean the doctor with assistance for Mrs. De Armond. It might mean some chance interruption from the street, which would help neither side. It might mean—oh, kind heaven!—it might mean that my message had been read and fully understood in *The Planet* office!

Was it too soon for this to be the case? No, for *The Planet*, aristocrat among newspapers, is up-town, and it had been more than an hour since my note went.

Mrs. De Armond flew to the bell and pressed it. My heart leaped once, and seemed to stop beating. Wallace—poor, helpless darling!—very certain of a husband's duties, drew his arm about me, and whispered, "Be brave, dearest. I will take care of you. Nobody shall touch you till they have settled with me."

And on the instant the room was full of blue-coated policemen, a man whom I instinctively knew must be Mr. Hardwicke leading. Never did my kind appear so admirable! Never did mere human beings wear such an aspect of ministers of life, saviors of more than life. I could not see their blue coats and brass buttons, for the mist of tears that swam between!

The scene seemed to steady Mrs. De Armond, as though it froze her. Poor, demented soul, I fancy she must have imagined something like this as a possible end, when her mania first took its criminal bent.

"This is your doing," she said to me.

"It is," I answered; "but we do not

mean you any harm, Mrs. De Armond. We only refuse to submit dumbly to—to what you might think it necessary to your own plans to—to send upon us. We only want justice for all."

She had drawn a small vial from the bosom of her dress, and now quickly dropped its contents into a tiny benédictine-glass on the table. "I drink to the health of the bride and bridegroom," she said, easily. "There are people who do not know when the game is played out, who cannot see when they are beaten; but I am not one of them."

I think no one of us had caught her sinister purpose; that none of us would have had the sense to stop her; but, as her hand went up, Mr. Hardwicke's cool, steady fingers caught the wrist, with a murmured, "Excuse me," his other hand covered the glass; and Mrs. De Armond collapsed, sobbing, half-fainting as they laid her down.

We knew, from the odor of bitter almonds that filled the room, what had been in that tiny glass. The poor thing, like Frederick the Great, had been carrying instant death around with her as a refuge, if her plans miscarried. Perhaps it would have been better to let her go; but human beings are not allowed to decide these matters.

Wallace hurried me out of the room into the hallway, where we found the maid and sent her to care for her mistress. We ourselves went back into the den, and Mr. Hardwicke sought us there, helpful, capable; quietly taking down the story between whiles, as I gave it to him—in what you may be sure was an abridged form.

"I was in terror lest you should overlook my message," I said to him.

"It was luck—straight luck," he returned, laughing. "I was just leaving the office as the note came in; the handwriting caught my eye first, and made me stop to tear it open; and once open, of course, I couldn't miss your marginal reference. Miss Hetherington—" Wallace and I both flushed and smiled. "Oh, it is Mrs. De Armond already? You *were* married?

Well, I congratulate you heartily. Mrs. De Armond, allow me to say, that in a somewhat wide experience—for a fellow of my age—I have never met a piece of cleverness, of adroit management, an exhibition of pure courage, that so commanded my respect and admiration, as that small marginal reference."

I had described to Wallace how I wrote that letter at Mrs. De Armond's dictation. Now, he broke in, "A marginal reference! How could you, under those circumstances, put anything in your note that hinted at our situation?"

"I judge, from the state of things, that you must have got out that message to me under her very eyes," Mr. Hardwicke commented.

"No," I answered, smiling a little, "it was under something more than Mrs. De Armond's eyes. Have you my note with you, Mr. Hardwicke? Oh, yes, thank you. Let me show it to my husband." I unfolded the sheet, explaining to Wallace. He looked with puzzled eyes at the paper. Upon it was the message his step-mother had dictated, and my signature.

When he had looked from this to my face, in deep mystification, I called his attention to some minute hieroglyphics at the side. "Well," he asked, "and what are those tiny quail tracks? They look as though a pencil had rubbed against the paper by mistake."

Mr. Hardwicke laughed. "Those tiny quail tracks, Mr. De Armond, are the whole of the matter. That minute tracking says—at least, it says to me, and to your wife, or to anyone who uses the same stenographic system—'Come quick to the De Armond mansion with ten policemen, and save a life. Big scoop for *Planet*.' Those tiny characters, Mr. De Armond, are shorthand. But, remember, we don't know yet how it was possible for you to put even that on your note," said Mr. Hardwicke. "I am still wondering, and unable to conceive. How was it?"

"It was sheer desperation," I an-

swered, "like all inspirations of the sort. I calculated about how much space I could have. I sat, with her watching me, and managed, by interrupting her dictation with some suggestions, which gave opportunity to change and work over the main note itself, to steal time to place these tiny lines so that they were concealed as I

held up the note for inspection. If she had taken it from my hand she would have instantly seen them. But all was so boldly done, the note so clearly legible where she sat, and so exactly what she conceived it should be, that the little life-saving message lay safe, unsuspected, under my thumb."



MATHEMATICS

QUOTH Cupid, "A puzzle I wish to propound,
The strangest one under the heavens;
When three persons stay where a pair are enough
The party's at sixes and sevens."



A TWENTIETH-CENTURY SPIRIT

GABRIEL—Won't that spirit play his harp?

St. PETER—No; he says he wants some kind of a machine to do it for him.



GLAD OF IT

THE BENEDICK—Don't you bachelors get awfully lonesome at times?

THE BACHELOR—Yes, thank heaven, we do.



OUT WEST

MRS. WINDYCITY—I hear that Mrs. Packer is quite a collector. What is her fad?

MRS. LAKESIDE—Husbands.

